MARGOLEEN

MRS. POCA T. SMITH

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Mrs. Poca T. Smith.

MARGOLEEN,

—BY—

Mrs. Poca T. Smith,

Author of "Lucy Hilward, or, Lashed by the Waves of Adversity," "Modern Plan of Education," "An Evening's Reverie," Etc.

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To My Sweet, Old Gray-Haired Mother, who Holds an affection in my heart which nothing can erase, do I inscribe this unpretentious story.

—P. T. S.

Preface.

Upon life's sea I set this sail,
  A trembling bark to test the wave,
As from my soul a prayer ascends
  That it be honored to the grave;
By all who have the power to feel,
  Yea, know *life's truths* herein defined,
Who can discern an influence breathed
  To purify the heart and mind.

—The Author.

MARGOLEEN.

CHAPTER I.

"Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my lowly head,
And vex the dust thou mights't, a time, have saved.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry,
But thou, go by.
Woman, if it were thine error or thy crime,
I care no longer, being here unblest,
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie,
Go by, go by."

Cuthbert was indeed a beautiful Kentucky home. The imposing old mansion stood at the head of a grand arcade of stately elms, which lifted their towering branches loftily toward heaven, and lent a grateful shade to the green-turft lawn beneath.

Gently sloping meadows, and orchards whose trees were laden with white and pink blossoms, lay at the outskirts of the grand avenue, through which a graveled drive led to the main entrance. On either side the ground was a pool, in which

the water-lilies trembled on the gently agitated breast of its clear surface. There were broad and productive fields covered with white and red clover blossoms, from whose petals the army of bees sipped honey, whilst humming their ceaseless drone. (Together with bank-stock and valuable slaves belong this inheritance.) Marion Lewis, a young man of noble character, awoke one morning to find himself sole heir to this lordly estate. His love for the beautiful (being excelled only by his Christian graces) caused him to invest his already comfortable home with every device suggestive of loveliness.

On entering the grounds, flowers sent a breath of welcome to you, filling the air with their sweet fragrance. His home he furnished indicative of refinement. Being of an affectionate and companionable disposition, and without kindred ties, he considered God's word, to-wit: "'Tis not meet that man should live alone," and so decided to take unto himself a wife.

Accordingly he wooed and married Miss Ira Stanton, the daughter of a farmer, whose income was small, yet sufficiently comfortable to allow them to live in moderate style.

Ira being the only child, unfortunately, was spoiled to a great extent, and often put her father to inconvenience in gratifying her extravagant

whims. Priding herself on her equestrianship, she induced him to buy her a spirited black steed, and riding-habit of like color. It was her delight to ride, as well as to be admired for grace, and she often passed Cuthbert *en route* to their neighboring city, from which the people of the surrounding community bought their supplies, and which numbered about six thousand inhabitants.

"It was a nice distance for a horse-back ride," she said, and it was upon one of these occasions that Marion Lewis, having been to the city for his mail, came unexpectedly upon his future fate.

Slowly he was returning home, his bridle hung over the pomel of his saddle, while in his hands he held an open newspaper. So deeply was he absorbed in its topics, that he did not see or hear Ira riding up behind him until her horse, with a loud snort, lunged frantically across the road, apparently frightened at the newspaper he held in his hands. Instantly he sprang to her side, and grasping her horse's rein patted him to docility. Then raising his arms, to what he supposed, a very much frightened girl, with terror-stricken face, instead he beheld a beautiful and undaunted woman, and he said, "Would you not like to dismount and exchange horses with me? Mine is very gentle, and if you will

pardon me for scaring yours (which might have ended disastrously) I will see you safely to your destination. I was really unaware of your presence until the accident occurred. Will you accept my apology? Please do," he urged, "and let me put you upon my horse."

"Most certainly you are forgiven," said she, as her beautiful black eyes flashed upon him. "I am neither hurt nor scared, so you need not be alarmed about me. Dickson and I have these little flurries occasionally, but he must learn that I am to be obeyed, and consequently submit to my will, which he is fast learning to do. I do not wish to exchange horses, but, if you like, you may ride with me," she continued, as she adjusted her jaunty cap over her shining braids, drew up her queenly figure, and gave Dickson a keen cut with her whip, which sent him into a gait that caused his beautiful chestnut sorrel to stretch its long limbs and ply its feet industriously in order to keep apace.

After they were fairly started, he said to her, "Under the precarious circumstances, I believe, I have been so forgetful as to fail to introduce myself. My name is Marion Lewis, and I would be very much pleased to know whom I have the honor of escorting."

"My name is Ira Stanton."

"Thank you," he replied courteously.

"And do you reside in this vicinity?"

"My father, who is a farmer, has lived for more than a year not farther than three miles from here. He, mother, and myself constitute our family."

"O yes, I recall to mind, your father, I presume, is the late occupant of the Wickliff farm."

"Yes sir, he purchased the place and moved there some eighteen months ago."

"Well, Miss Stanton, I wont admit that I am a recluse, neither am I selfishly disposed, but I love my home so much I seldom leave the plantation, and greatly fear I am remiss in my duty to my neighbors. I remember now to have met your father down at the city, and have thought to visit him, but this, like many other things, I have neglected to do; however, with your permission I would be pleased to amend my past conduct by calling on you at an early period."

Receiving her consent, he lifted her from her saddle; and holding the yard gate ajar for her to pass in, bade her a reluctant adieu. Three months later she became his wife, and like a queen on her royal throne, did she make the attempt to reign supreme at Cuthbert. All things she desired to bow in homage to her will. With riches, her love of admiration increased

swaying everything that precluded her vain gratifications, bringing her husband to realize the discord of their natures. He was unassuming in his habits, and loved a quiet life, whilst she liked gayety and fashionable society, hence their hearts refused to harmonize, making their marriage a union of hands, not souls. However, his vow to protect her was sacredly kept, and worthy a place on the records of Heaven.

If his embrace of love was less tender, he ever treated her with kind consideration, looking upon her misgivings as more of a misfortune, than a fault to be censured, although he would not always yield to what he considered her erroneous ideas of a happy life, and her retorts rang vindictively upon his ear, when he adhered to *his* version of home comfort, or in other words, conjugal happiness. A gloom settled upon his brow, his hands had grasped an illusive dream, and opened but to find blighted prospects of a yearning life.

Occasionally she felt the influence of his depressed spirits, and with feigned sympathy soothed him into a state of blissfulness. His heart thirsted for consolation, and when she laid her hand upon his shoulder, and looked sympathetically into his eyes, such moments would sweeten his life.

"How exquisite one single drop of bliss
That sparkles on the top of misery's cup,
What though to-morrow our sky be darker,
That fact makes our blissful moments of to-day
Cast intenser radiance while they last."

Five years had gone by, and Ira Lewis' disposition is left unchanged. This evening she sits by the sick-bed of her husband, who has fallen into a quiet sleep, and as she watches the fire-light throw its flickering rays over the floor, the wind sounds pathetically mournful through the swaying elms, which are now bereft of verdure, and like the looming spires of their neighboring city, bear the impress of a kiss from cold winter's frosty lips. Flake upon flake, the gently falling snow has covered roof and branch, until from distant view its white sheen places tower and earth upon a level, making the beautiful landscape an emblem of purity.

The dying day goes down under a dark canopy, and the world is hushed into silence. The following morning a deep, tender gloom hung over the grand old mansion. Between the setting and rising of the sun, its mistress had been made a mother and a widow.

"Good-bye, Ira, teach our boy to be a Christian," were the last words of Marion Lewis ere his soul took flight to Heaven.

CHAPTER II.

Thirty years of time have trailed the earth since the opening of our story. Again we look in upon Ira Stanton, who is still the widow of Marion Lewis and the mistress of Cuthbert, which, but for the wisdom of her husband, who entailed it to his son, would have long since (through her extravagance) been squandered, and passed into other hands.

Again winter spreads her snowy mantle. Yesterday the flakes fell thick and fast, necessarily keeping all in doors with only the privilege of breaking the monotony by gazing through the windows at the driving sheets. This morning, however, the sun shines sufficiently warm to melt it from the hillsides exposed to its rays, leaving the more shaded spots still wrapped in its cold embrace.

Clad in a hunting suit of rich brown hue, Ethen Lewis stoops to buckle his snow-boots, when his attention is arrested by a scowl of disapproval upon the brow of his mother.

"What's going wrong with your world now, ma mere? Wouldn't you like to breakfast on birds and fresh hare?" quote he.

"Not to the extent of having my plans for the day thwarted," she replied.

"And pray, what have I to do with frustrating your plans? Am I not always found on duty as regards the welfare of my most considerate mother? Pray don't mar the pleasure of this day's hunt, for the whining of my dogs, Larkin and Don, show that they, like their master, are anxious to hie across the fields."

"Ethan, I'll admit that in most things you are a dutiful son, and yet there are times when you provoke me almost beyond endurance. I have invited some young ladies to visit us, among whom is the accomplished heiress of the Pine Grove Mansion, and to-day, you well know, is the appointed time for their arrival. I imagine the embarrassment the non-appearance of my son will occasion at the reception."

"O mother," said he, as a wearied look settled upon his hitherto happy countenance, "is there no rest from this code of fashionable life? Is there no place one can hide and rest, at least for a time, from the stern law which fashionable society demands?"

"I see you are not inclined to grant my wishes by remaining at home."

"I dislike to baffle your intrigue to throw the heiress and your most worthy son together," he replied, with curling lip, "but I'm not to be turned from my purpose," so swinging his game

sack over his neck, and shouldering his gun, he concluded, "I must hunt to-day, mother, but will come home early, and to-night play the agreeable to your heart's content."

She stood at the window and watched him, as with dogs following close at his heels, he crossed the stile and walked from her sight. Then going back to the fire, she dropped into her chair and involuntarily exclaimed, "O, what a boy, there never was, nor never will be, one just like him. Many fair women, of richest dower, have given him their hearts without the asking, and yet he doesn't seem to acknowledge or appreciate his power of fascination. That he is a kind and honorable son, cannot be disputed, yet I know it lies within his power to make me a much happier woman than I am. The quiet uneventful life I'm living, with no female companion, no husband, and often, on account of his rambling disposition, deprived of my son's society, awakens me to the knowledge that he ought to marry. Miss Blanche Clifton, the aforesaid heiress, is the woman I have determined to call my daughter, hence planned this visit, that association may consummate my predominant wish, yet the eccentricity of Ethan's disposition warns me that in engineering his future, an arduous task lies before me! His father before

him was a very peculiar man, though I never doubted his devotion, for he was ever kind, never denying me any enjoyment whatever. His purse was never shut against my desires. He never neglected me in any way, and yet there was an irresponsiveness in our lives which, at times, made me feel a coldness through every fiber of my nature. In fact I think he must have been too old for me, his taste was always the opposite of mine. When I expressed a desire to spend a season in the city, he always accompanied me, yet I could tell that he much preferred the quietude of his country home. He bought me every article that my fastidious taste demanded, yet when I dressed myself in the most elaborate style and went to him for a word of praise, he surveyed me with a sad smile and answered my query (Don't your wife look pretty?) by the words: 'Beauty is adorned most, when unadorned.' Yes, I know he loved me, and yet there was not much affinity between us. There was a depth in his nature I could never fathom, and now how plainly do I realize that not only the admirable traits of his father, but also his absurd peculiarities, are the inheritance of our son. Just how to manage him I do not know. If I urge my wish too strongly, he will at once leave home, and perhaps wander around the

world twelve months before I see him again. He is now twenty-five years old, and if he ever intends to marry, why wait longer? Miss Clifton is accomplished, queen-like in appearance, and dresses with faultless splendor; then too, her estate, together with that of my son's, would be a most enviable object indeed. Now if I can bring him to reason he will at once see his folly in refusing to accede to my plans, and secure for himself this bright-plumaged bird, e're it soars away to other realms, and is captured by a less worthy man."

And thus a designing mother is scheming to marry her son to the object of her choice, instead of allowing the finger of God to point out to him the woman to whom his heart will spontaneously respond. Matrimony is a grand stage of action, and remembering that the greatest dramatist says, "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind," can we take the great responsibility upon ourselves of mating other lives than our own? In other words, can we look through the window of another's soul and discern the qualities essential to its happiness? No, no, a warning voice from the sepulchre of wrecked hearts cries, "God forbid."

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Lewis met her visitors with a hearty welcome. Miss Clifton having laid aside her seal-skin wrap, sat by the glowing grate swaying gracefully back and forth in a large arm-rocker, her handsome brocaded skirts rustling upon the velvet carpet, while her over-polite hostess dissembled and feigned an excuse for her son's absence.

It will never do, thought she, to let her know that he left home on this particular occasion, merely to go hunting, so she told them that early that morning her son had very unexpectedly been called away on some urgent business. "He bade me tender his regrets," she continued, "and say that he would be with us early this evening." Miss Clifton seemed satisfied with the apology.

Belle Seaton gave her head an independent toss, whilst Maud Lindsey looked at her pretty blue-eyed sister, Emma, questioningly. Plans for the season were then discussed by Mrs. Lewis and her four young lady visitors. As the shades of evening begun to lengthen, Mrs. Lewis grew restless, and excusing herself from her guests, left them, hurriedly sought her son's valet and inquired:

"Phil has your master returned?"

"No ma'am," was the reply.

"Well Phil, I want you to keep watch for him, and as soon as he enters the plantation meet him and tell him for goodness sake to come around to the side or back entrance, as I do not wish our visitors to know that he has been out hunting to-day, knowing that we were expecting them. You understand, don't you, Phil? He is very unthoughted, and just as apt to come in before them with gun and dogs as any other way, which might prove to be an unpardonable offense, so be on the alert, Phil."

"Certainly, Miss Ira, you may depend on me, the company-folks shan't know Mars Ethen been hunting to-day."

Her fears somewhat alleviated by the assurance of Phil, she next proceeded to tell the house-keeper to spare no pains in giving the most elaborate finish to tea service.

During her absence, Belle Seaton, the high-spirited, good-humored, flashing brunette, had left her seat and was sauntering about the room, when from a remote corner she drew forth an old chess-board, whose crevice formed a tenement for a huge spider. Shaking him from his abode, she laughingly exclaimed as she watched him run across the floor, causing the other girls to flee in terror to the opposite side of the room,

"Oh girls, don't be frightened, I'll open the door and let him out, for 'tis an evident fact that he, like the master of Cuthbert, prefers to seek other amusement than entertain us. Come girls, Mr. Spider is now gone; here is the board, let's have a game all to ourselves. It isn't often we can play a game independent of our superior sex, and I am sure we will enjoy the freedom of the occasion."

When Mrs. Lewis returned, she was pleased to see them apparently much interested in the game. She chatted gayly, yet her expectant gaze was often turned toward the door. Another hour had passed, her son had not yet made his appearance. Had he forgotten his training in etiquette? Did he not mean to be there to escort their guests to supper? Why did he not come?

Consulting her watch again, she decided that it would be out of all propriety to wait longer, so she ordered supper, and concealing her embarrassment as best she could, invited her guests out to the dining-room, assuring them of her son's annoyance at being detained.

"Dear Blanche," she whispered, as she threw her arm lovingly around the waist of the heiress, an act plainly observed by Belle Seaton, "I do so pity poor Ethan, since I know he has so longed for the arrival of this day; 'tis too bad

that he had to be called off so unexpectedly, but I am sure he will soon come in; 'tis growing late, and he said he would be with us early; I trust you will not attribute his absence to lack of appreciation."

"Oh, no," replied Miss Clifton, as an insipid smile played about her mouth, and drawing down her aquiline nose she concluded, "I am sure some unavoidable event has detained him."

Supper being over, the house was lighted up in dazzling splendor. The effulgent pendants of the chandeliers in their crystal brightness seemed to vie with the burning lights. Each young lady in her turn had favored their hostess with their best execution on the piano. The last lingering strain of the pathetic song, "I'm Nobody's Darling," sung by blue-eyed Emma Lindsey, echoed through the spacious hall, when the door was ruthlessly thrust open, and Ethan Lewis, begored with blood, staggered in beneath a heavy burden held in his arms, which proved to be a wounded girl of nine summers, and who now in a dead swoon, lay peacefully against his agitated breast.

The sound of Miss Lindsey's voice, and the deep tone of the instrument, did not prevent the quick ear of Mrs. Lewis from recognizing the footsteps of her long-looked-for son, neither did

she fail to detect that he came in through the front door, and in an unusually boisterous manner at that.

She tried to suppress her tears, but again left the room, this time taking great pains to shut the door securely after her. Hurriedly she sped down the hall-way, occasionally stepping over a spot of blood, which glared suggestively upon the inlaid marble floor, and which sent an additional pang to her already fearful heart. On and on she flew, after his receding footsteps, and reached the back sitting-room in time to see him lay a limp figure, with pale face and tangled hair, upon the sofa.

CHAPTER IV.

"O, my son," she cried, as standing aghast, she beheld the awful spectacle, "what does this mean? Are you hurt Ethan?" she continued, as she looked at his blanched cheek.

"No, no, mother," he replied, "do be quick to bring me some water, camphor, or something, can't you see? O, I have killed this poor child, what am I to do? Hasn't Phil gotten back yet? I told him to run for Dr. Bedford, and it does seem that he has had ample time to get back."

The Doctor came in to find the remorseful man on his knees, chaffing the hands of the still

unconscious girl, audibly upbraiding himself for the terrible accident. His lamentation was truly affecting, nor did he seem conscious of the Doctor's presence until he patted him on the shoulder and said, "Mr. Ethan, I am here; come, what is the occasion of this scene?"

"I accidentally shot this child, Doctor, and fear I have killed her," he answered with pleading eyes.

The Doctor, placing his ear to the child's heart, and examining her pulse, said, "Oh, no, she is not dead by any means, only faint from loss of blood." And upon further examination assured them that the wound was not fatal, the shot having only entered the fleshy part of her arm and hip.

"Thank God," said Ethan, "and now Doctor, do all you can to restore her; money shall be no object."

While Mrs. Lewis sat vaguely listening, and the Doctor applied restoratives, held by his willing hands, Ethan explained to them that having enjoyed his day's hunt so much, he unfortunately forgot he had promised his mother to return early, and was surprised to find it almost dark ere he thought to turn his steps homeward, being some distance off too, heavily loaded with the game of a successful day's hunt, and a little foot

weary, he was slowly approaching home, after the gathering darkness had overtaken him, when a dark object moved behind the huge gate-post of Cuthbert avenue. He, mistaking the object for a dog that was reported as having been seen trespassing his sheep pastures, fired the fatal shot, which to his horror was followed by the piercing cry of the wounded child. Throwing his gun down he gained the spot to find the girl lying with face downward upon the cold ground. He shook her and tried to raise her up, but as no motion or sound followed that first shrill scream, the great fear that her life was extinct seized upon him, and scarcely realizing what he did, he gathered her in his strong arms and ran towards home. Meeting Phil, whom his mother had stationed at the gate, he called to him in an imperious voice to fly for Dr. Bedford, and taking in the situation at a glance, Phil awaited no explanation, but hurried on at his utmost speed.

"And had you taken my advice and remained at home," interrupted his mother, "the accident would not have occurred."

Ethan made no reply to these words, in fact 'tis doubtful that he heard them, since he was so anxiously watching the patient, whose movements of hands and limbs were now beginning to indicate returning life, although the eyelids

were still closed, and the thin lips tightly compressed. Her wound being nicely dressed, the Doctor took leave, telling them she would soon be all right, and that he would call early the next morning.

After his exit, Mrs. Lewis said to her son, "Ethan, the child seems to be getting along nicely now; and our guests must feel that we are neglecting them, suppose we call in the housekeeper, or my maid, to watch beside the patient, and we go to our visitors. I am sure an explanation, and an apology too, is due them. You will find your room and clothing in waiting. Do hurry and cleanse yourself of that bloody garb, and for goodness sake don't look like you had committed murder, or stolen something; do look pleasant, by all means."

"But the child, mother; can I smile and know that I am the cause of her pain?"

"Oh pshaw son, the girl is all right, besides you do not know what kind of cattle she is. I'll be bound she'll be up by times in the morning, and likely as not ready to pocket every available article she can conveniently conceal, and then you will feel rewarded for your pains, no doubt."

"I shall not trust her to the care of the dependents, not yet, at least," said he.

"You are a silly goose," she answered, know-

ing full well that he meant just what he said, and that she would have trouble in removing this difficulty. So she next suggested that she herself would remain with the child, if he would go to the young ladies and explain, what she considered, his impoliteness.

"Sit with them until bedtime, Ethan," she continued. "I'll take care of this unfortunate child, who has imprudently strayed too late, and thereby met the consequences."

"Enough, mother, you may go to our visitors and make my excuses for me. Tell them I have been so unfortunate as to accidentally wound a little girl, and that I shall not leave her until I am satisfied of her recovery, and beg her forgiveness."

"And mark my words, Ethan, you'll live to repent your decision," and the eyes of Ira Lewis flashed a dangerous gleam upon the sleeping child, who started nervously at the unkind slamming of the door, as the angry woman swept disdainfully from the room, leaving her son astonished at her incompassionate heart.

Going back to the parlor, she insisted upon the girls resuming their music, which they graciously did, while she framed an excuse for her son's behavior. The sweet song of Belle Seaton was not in unison with the raging billows of her

soul, as unmindful of its sentiment she sat gazing into the fire and planned an apology to suit the emergency.

Alone with his charge, Ethan sat watching the workings of her features, when slowly she opened her great violet eyes of soulful expression, whose marvelous tenderness shone into his like clear deep pools of water, at whose depth dark tinted autumn leaves are lying. The strong man, dumb with admiration, watched her turn her gaze upon the richly furnished room, allowing it to linger upon a beautiful painting of Cuthbert, upon whose doorstep stood a handsome lad, his arm thrown lovingly around the neck of his favorite dog. When again her eyes sought his face, their legible expression told that she recognized the boy to be a picture of the man before her.

The lovely adornings of the apartment, together with the sweet strains of music issuing from the parlor, seemed for a time to lull her into a state of hallucination, and when Ethan inquired if she felt better, she evaded the question by asking where she was.

"Oh where am I?" was her cry. "I am surely dead, and this is Heaven, but where is mother that she does not come to greet her Margoleen?"

CHAPTER V.

Gathering tears filled the eyes of Ethan Lewis, which convinced the child of his sincerity, while he explained to her that he was the cause of her suffering.

"No, thank Heaven, you are not dead little girl," he continued, "you may rest assured that you are in the hands of a friend, who feels that nothing he can do will atone for the pain he has given you, and now will you forgive me, and tell me your name?"

"I don't care. It don't hurt me much now," she answered in childish sympathy. "My name is Margoleen Melbroke, but the folks at the inn call me Marg, and Dinah said if I came home without the cow this time she would beat me. That's her lowing now," and turning her ear to listen, she sprang suddenly to her feet and called aloud, "Souke Pied." All color forsook her face, with the exception of a blue circle around her mouth, which showed that pain had overpowered her and checked her flight. Gently he laid her back upon the pillows, and reaching for a class of wine, quickly held it to her pale lips and bade her drink. Thus revived, she continued:

"I must go on after her, or she'll be gone, and I'll be afraid to go in the dark after her." Turn-

ing upon the side of the couch, she again made the attempt to arise.

"Poor child," said he, "you cannot go. You must be quiet. No one shall harm you here."

"But," said she, after the pain caused by her exertion had passed away, "Dinah told me, when she sent me for the cow this time, that if I didn't fetch her, I need never come back myself, if I did she would beat me soundly, and I'm so afraid to sleep out in the night, for Dinah says the devil would be sure to catch me, and I thought I heard him coming when I hid behind the gate-post at that pretty place to listen only just a little bit to the sweet music. Oh, you had better let me go on, you wouldn't want the devil to get a poor little girl like me, would you? Dinah would be glad of it, I know she would, for she said so, but mother said if I would be good and mind, that God would take me up in Heaven to live with her, and pshaw, I must go take Pied home, for I had a heap better time with mother than I do with Dinah."

Finding that persuasion was of no avail, he consequently assumed an air of authority, and in as stern a voice as he could then bring himself to speak to her, said:

"Margoleen you must be quiet. I can't let you go to-night; you are my little girl now, at

least until you get well, so cease fretting and go to sleep."

"Won't Dinah and Hicks come here after me, and beat me 'cause I don't come on with Pied?"

"No, no, child, you are in safe hands. Do go to sleep, and when you are better you may tell me all about it."

"Well this is a mighty pretty place to sleep in," she said, as again her eyes surveyed the apartment.

Finding it quite necessary, he administered the opiate left by the Doctor, to be given in case of wakefulness. After watching her fall into a peaceful slumber, being quite tired from his tramp over the rough frozen ground the previous day, he concluded to prepare for a doze at least, so wrapping himself in his great coat, with a foot-stool in front under the rocker, and his feet against the couch upon which the child lay, he threw his chair into a recumbent position and tried to sleep, but vain was the attempt. The entire night was spent in brooding over his unfortunate mistake, and in wondering who and what the attractive child could be. That she was an orphan and living with brutal people, was evident by her incoherent speeches, as she occasionally moved restlessly, and in her sleep insisted on going after Pied. But her parentage

was left a veiled mystery, which he determined to solve as soon as he deemed it expedient. "My mother's heart is set against this child," he soliloquized, just because she wished my presence in the parlor to-night instead of here, where duty demands that I should be. For I am sure attention is needed, and she shall not want for any service I can render her; neither shall one night's vigilance be all, she shall have every attention that I or my money can procure, and if I find that she is really an outcast, by jove, I'll adopt her, regardless of my mother's sneers. I am master of Cuthbert, and if I choose to give a poor little waif a home, whom need it concern. My mother, I am sure, will be no less considered, and as she is ever complaining of having no female companion, this arrangement might prove to be the very thing for her. Yes, as I have no desire to encumber myself with the modern wife of society, this little girl might serve to appease her harrague about me marrying, and content her to try to train it up to her liking, or who in turn, which would be far better, might so infuse her innocent spirit as to cause my mother, though late in life, to turn from her fraudulent purpose to more noble desires. And thus ran his muse until the loud song of the chanticleer swelled the glad tidings of another

day's dawn. Then going noiselessly, on tip-toe, to the door of the house-keeper he rapped gently, and on being asked by a voice from within, "who comes there?" he answered, "It is I, Mrs. Moorleigh."

"You, Mr. Lewis?" she inquired, "what has happened. Is your mother sick?"

"No, no, I want you to come down to the back sitting-room; I have something to say to you there."

"You don't mean that you want me to come before breakfast?"

"Yes, yes, come right on as soon as you are dressed. Don't disturb anyone, as I wish to see you alone."

Hurrying back he sat by the fire awaiting her arrival, when opening the door she made her appearance with apparent wonder stamped upon her countenance.

"What will you have?" she inquired of him.

"Come in Mrs. Moorleigh, be seated," he added, proffering her a chair.

She took a seat, but looked from the sleeping child to Ethan's face questioningly.

"I see you are wondering what this means," he said, nodding his head toward the couch. He then explained all to her, also his mother's actions the night previous.

"And has she not been in during the night to see about the child!"

"No, Mrs. Moorleigh, I am sorry to say it, but my mother has never shown her face here since I refused to go to the parlor last night."

"Well, Mr. Lewis," said the kind-hearted old lady, "don't worry about it, you know your mother can't surely mean harm to the little girl, only she always wants us to do as she commands. She'll be all right I dare say, when she thinks the matter over. 'Tis a great pity for you and the child too, but we can't prevent accidents. She'll be well in a few days," she continued, as she bent and examined the child; "she is a pretty little thing; trust me, Mr. Lewis, I'll help you nurse her, and your mother will too when she considers the matter."

CHAPTER VI.

Reassured by the sympathy and encouragement of Mrs. Moorleigh, Ethan felt better, and leaving his charge in the hands of this good woman for awhile, went to his room, bathed his face and eyes, which were now red from the loss of sleep, and dressed himself preparatory to meeting their guests. Having given his rather hasty toilet the finishing touches, he descended

the stairs to find his mother all smiles, stationed in the hall to receive him.

"Good morning, son," said she, "are you quite sure you are able to be up this morning after being out in the cold yesterday?"

"I am quite well, thank you, mother," he answered, as he approached, laid his arm caressingly around her shoulders and kissed her upon the cheek.

Without mentioning the accident of the previous night, together they went to the parlor, and after the usual formula of introduction, led their visitors out to a sumptuous breakfast, where, with the tact of a true Kentuckian, he did the honors of the table. His hospitality, rendered with such accomplished grace, stirred the admiration of all present. The meal being over, he remained with them until several hours of the morning had passed, when excusing himself he hurried to relieve the house-keeper of what he deemed his especial charge. On entering the room he was rejoiced to find the little girl sitting propped up with a pillow, while Mrs. Moorleigh combed out her beautiful silken ringlets of burnished gold, which had hitherto been one solid, tangled mat. The little white gown which, by his suggestion, had taken the place of the well-worn, faded, blood-besmeared dress, togethe

with her clean washed face, and the sightly appearance of the bed apparel, gave the apartment, which was already becoming a sanctum of purity to him, an additional charm.

"See Margoleen," he said, as he held up a nosegay plucked from the choicest plants of the hot-house, "I have brought my little sufferer some flowers. How do you feel this morning?" he continued, as he seated himself beside the couch and held the flowers close for her inspection.

"Oh, how good of you," she exclaimed, as her eager hands grasped and placed them to her nose. "But where did you get them? How could they grow in the cold snow? I could never find any in the snow."

He then explained to her the art of raising flowers by the process of a hot-house, concluding by repeating his query, "But you have not told me how you feel this morning?"

"Oh, I feel real good, only when I try to stand up I get sick again."

"And have you eaten any breakfast?"

"Yes indeed, I liked that boiled bird, and the nice biscuit, but she," pointing to Mrs. Moorleigh, "wouldn't let me eat as much as I wanted."

"That is Mrs. Moorleigh, Margoleen; she is

your friend, and is afraid for you to satisfy your appetite until you are better. She fears it might create fever to load your stomach, but never mind little one, when you are stronger you may eat all you want."

"Yes," he assented, when Mrs. Moorleigh asked if she could be excused for a while, "and many thanks for your kindness," he added.

"Is there any message you would like for me to deliver to the servants?" she inquired, as she held the door ajar to depart.

"No, no, Phil understands my orders for the day; but stay, yes, hold on," he called after she had passed the threshold, "have one of the little negro girls cleaned up and sent to me, I wish her in here to wait upon the sick child."

"Which one would you have me send?"

"Well, send Tricksy, she is not so likely as some of the rest, but her antic ways are surely diverting, and with all she is a kind-hearted creature."

Being left to resume his conversation with the little girl, he said, "Now Margoleen, I want you to tell me who it is you call Dinah and Hicks?"

"Oh, Dinah is the woman, and Hicks is the man I live with."

"And where do they live?"

"Down at the city, where they keep the Lowland Inn."

"And have they no name but Dinah and Hicks?"

"Don't you know Dinah and Hicks?" she replied. "Dinah's face is red, and Hick's hair is yellow."

He smiled, as he answered in the negative. "No I don't happen to be acquainted with them. But how came you to be living with them? Are you akin?"

"No indeed," she answered, assuming an air of dignity. "My father was an Englishman, who was lost in a shipwreck, and my mother died on a steamboat."

"What was her name?"

"Her name was Agnes Melbroke."

"And how old were you when she died, Margoleen?"

"I was six years old and going on seven, but now I am nine."

"How did you say you came to be living with Dinah?"

"Oh, I didn't say at all; but when mother died I cried and cried, they took her off the boat and buried her under a big tree. Hicks cried, but Dinah didn't though. Hicks took me by the hand and said, 'Old woman, we'll take the

young one, she'll be a heap of help to you in time.' 'All right,' answered Dinah, but we'll have no airs about her; I'll learn her to work to be sure.'''

"What did Dinah and Hicks do on the boat?"

"Hicks cooked, and Dinah cleaned the state-rooms and swept the water from the gangway."

"Do you love to live with Dinah?" he inquired.

"I don't know," she answered, "I haven't anywhere else to live. Dinah says if it had not been for her I would be dead and in the bottom of the river, and I sometimes wish I was. I like Hicks better'n I do Dinah."

"Why do you like him best?"

"'Cause I do."

"Does he whip you?"

"No he don't beat me like Dinah does."

Noticing that her eyes were full of tears, he said to her, "Margoleen, how would you like to live here and be my little girl?"

"Oh, may I?" said she, and she looked at him imploringly.

"I will see about it, but you must promise to be a good girl, and be certain to obey my mother."

"I will try," said she, "but who is your mother? Have I seen her?"

"Not to-day, but you will see her; she is a very beautiful lady, and you must be sure to mind her if you wish her to love you."

They were here interrupted by his mother opening the door to admit the doctor, who according to promise had called early in the day to see his patient.

"Good-morning sissy," he said in his bland way, "you are lots better, ar'n't you?"

"Oh, yes, yes, Mr. Lewis," he answered the inquiring eyes of Ethan, "she will soon be well, only keep her composed until the wound heals and all will be well."

"Ethan," said his mother, who still stood in the door, "there's a man out here who wishes to see you."

CHAPTER VII.

Going to the front door, he beheld a lank, blear-eyed, dowdily-dressed individual standing upon the doorstep, who wore earrings of half-moon design, and a green set ring upon his finger, his towsled hair, whose yellow locks reached nearly to his shoulders, together with his thin visage, presenting a ludicrous spectacle. Lifting his slouched hat and courtesying low, he inquired, "Be this the master of Cuthbert?"

"My name is Lewis," was the reply, and continued, "to whom am I indebted for this call?"

"Hicks is my name, and I chance to be the landlord of Lowland Inn."

"Walk in, Mr. Hicks," said Ethan, as he led the way to the library, and seated him by the fire.

"The air is chill this morning," began Hicks, as he warmed his shaking hands over the glowing grate, "but my business is urgent sir, yes, urgent sir; our little Marg stayed out last night, and I have been searching for her these four hours, fearing she may have died of the cold."

"Why did you wait until the night was spent to begin your search," asked Ethan with clouded brow.

"Well you see sir, I didn't know but what the young one was ter home in bed, until my wife told me this morning that she was not thar, nor hadn't been, since she sent her after the cow," and wiping a tear from his face with his horny hand, he continued, "I had searched the woods everywhere between here and the city, and had about given up, when I met your man," alluding to Phil, "who told me that the master of Cuthbert had accidentally shot a little girl while returning home last evening."

"Evening, fiddle-sticks," cried Ethan, "it was pitch dark when I came upon the child. What

did you and your wife mean to have her out in the snow, and at such an hour?''

''Oh, sir, it was not I indeed, but Dinah will have her way; it was her who sent Marg for the cow, preferring to keep me ter home to peel the potatoes and help with the supper. Please tell me about the poor lassie. Is she here? And is she hurt much?

''Yes sir, she is here, and here she shall remain my adopted protege. You know full well,'' he thundered in a wrathful voice, and shook his clinched fist in the face of the now cowering Hicks, ''that you have suffered this little girl to be cruelly treated, and besides I am convinced that you have no more rightful claim upon her than have I, therefore I repeat sir, that henceforth Cuthbert is her home, and that I, in legal form, shall be made her rightful protector. No, thank Heaven, her injuries are not considered fatal, and rest assured she shall have every comfort needful to her recovery.''

''What will Dinah say? She can't get along without the brat, and will blame me with every bit of it, I'm sure.''

''No matter,'' said his opponent, ''you allowed her to mistreat this innocent child, now settle it between you. But,'' continued he, as Hicks arose to depart, ''here is a ten dollar gold piece

I will give you if you will tell me truly all you know of her parentage."

"I don't know much to tell. Her mother, who was a sad faced lady, and who wore a crape veil over her bonnet, came aboard our boat one day, leading the young one by the hand. She registered as Agnes Melbroke, and claimed that she was searching for relatives of her husband, who was reported as having been lost in a ship-wreck. I can't tell you no more, only that she moped until she fell sick and died, leaving the little one with no one to set claim to her. We anchored the boat and buried her under a beautiful tree, not far from the shore, and Dinah and me have had the child ever since. No you may keep your pay," he continued, as he turned from the coin held out in Ethan's palm, "it would seem like blood-money, when I'm only too glad that the poor little thing has fallen into good hands. Only I fear the rage of Dinah when she finds our Marg is gone for good and always."

With these words he left the house, and Ethan knew that beneath the rude exterior there lurked a kind spirit which, but for fear of his ill-natured companion, would predominate.

The doctor on his way out stopped to give directions concerning his treatment, then laugh-

ingly told Ethan that he ought to hear his mother and the sick child conversing.

"What," he ejaculated, "is mother there?"

"To be sure," said the doctor, "and really, Lewis, I don't think I ever saw her enjoy anything more than she does talking to the little girl, whose quaint speeches and innocent questions could not fail to interest."

"The child is an outcast, doctor, and I have a mind to adopt her. What do you think of it?"

"Bravo, my man; I have always known that you possessed a kind heart," and the genial old doctor took his departure.

"Oh, how glad I would be if mother would learn to love her," thought Ethan, as in dressing gown and slippers, he stole softly down the corridor and peeped through the crevice of the door at his mother, who remained alone with the child. Never did she feel dearer to him than at this moment when he saw her leaning over the couch, explaining the scenes in a picture book which she held for the child's gratification. How sublime the deeds of woman when working in the sphere ordained by God.

And just now her son's heart went out to her in exuberant tenderness. Going quickly to her side, he smilingly said, "this is a beautiful tab-

leau, mother; tell me what you think of our little girl by now."

"She seems a great deal better, and I find her quite interesting."

"Well, I have decided to adopt her, as much for your sake as her own, mother. I am sure you will find her a great deal of company for you, more especially when I'm away from home."

A little misgiving could be detected in his countenance as she answered with hesitancy, "Perhaps so," then continued, "but don't you intend to marry, Ethan?"

"Oh, yes mother, some time in the future I may be lassoed by the matrimonial halter, but like the wild horse of the prairie, I prefer to enjoy my freedom yet awhile."

At this juncture Tricksy's keen eyes, whose quisical expression could not fail to evoke laughter, peered into the room as she inquired, "Mars Ethan, do you wants me?"

"Yes, come in Tricksy and and let me see how you look."

The little stumpy negress entered. Her ebony complexion contrasted greatly with the white rag tied over her head, and her long cotton apron stretched far towards a pair of naked feet, whose great toes turned up, as if they too wished to

inquire for what purpose they were summoned herein.

"Turn all around Tricksy," said he laughing, while his mother looked on in amazement. Placing her heel in the soft meshes of the carpet, she lifted the other foot and spun around like a top.

"That will do, I believe you are the best looking girl I have, but where are your shoes Tricksy?"

"Yes sir, I spec I is," was her answer to his compliment. "I leff my shoes and stocking out at the door, case I didn't wanter git dirt on missus fine carpet."

"Go this minute and put your shoes on, you will kill yourself going barefooted this cold weather."

On her way out, she looked back over her shoulder and answered with a grin that exposed a beautiful set of white teeth, set in blue gums.

"Yes sir, but I likes clean things, I does, and my shoes ain't berry nice."

"Never mind, you put them on, and when I go down to the city, I'll bring you some new ones."

Elated at the idea of having new shoes, she dexterously pulled her old ones on while her master explained to her and her mother, that he

wished her to stay there as a maid for Margoleen.

"I have no objection," replied his mother, "but would judge her to be a lame excuse to serve as waiting maid."

While this conversation is very interesting, we must not forget the young lady visitors, but leave the patient, who is now getting along nicely, and is all absorbed in the antic movements of her maid, while we return with Mrs. Lewis and her son, to their guests.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is now difficult to determine which of the four young ladies is more deeply impressed with Ethan Lewis. The Lindsey girls have strongly argued whether his eyes are gray or brown, but compromised by declaring his luxuriant brown moustache the handsomest they had ever seen. Belle Seaton said she liked him immensely well, whilst the heiress resolved in her heart that she herself would be the future mistress of Cuthbert, whose master had now, by the laws of his country, been made the guardian of Margoleen Melbroke.

Two weeks had gone by since the arrival of their guests, and Mrs. Lewis decided that with

the exception of a little more time spent in the room of the sick child than she deemed necessary, her son had played the gallant beautifully. So wrapped was she in the delusive dream of Miss Clifton becoming her daughter-in-law that she imagined his preference for her decided. That Belle Seaton was a favorite with him, was plainly discerned, by his changeful expression when speaking of the young ladies, and when in conversation with her you could not fail to detect his admiration of her genial spirit.

They were all assembled in the parlor one evening, busily engaged in a lively conversation, when Ethan's attention was arrested by the thud of the (now convalescent) child's crutch upon the hall floor.

He listened to her slowly limp on until she came in view, then without raising her eyes to look into the room, was about to pass by the door, when he called to her to stop.

"Come in here, Margoleen, I wish you to see these ladies." Timidly she crossed the floor, and going straight to him, stood with her hand upon the back of his chair, her eyes upon the carpet, to conceal her embarrassment. Her symmetrical form was now clad in a neat-fitting plaid merino dress, which, together with other necessary clothing, had been purchased by her

guardian. A little knot of pink ribbon held back from her face (which yet bore traces of suffering) a beautiful cluster of ringlets that hung from her shapely head.

"Look up, my wounded bird," he said, placing his long, keen fingers beneath her chin, and raising her face. "I want these ladies to see you," and a look of admiration gleamed in his own eyes.

The child looked up to be abashed by the undertone of Miss Clifton, who with a contemptuous air, said to Maud Lindsey:

"I can't see why some people make themselves so silly about children. Thank goodness, I was never given to humoring them, consequently, I get rid of them hanging around after me."

As if to divert her attention from this audible, and unkind speech, Ethan said, "Margoleen, did you ever see these ladies before?"

"I have seen that one," she answered, pointing her finger at Belle Seaton.

"How came you to know Miss Seaton?" he asked, with a questioning look at Belle, which brought a blush to her cheek by its intensity.

"Because she gave me this," was her reply, as she caught hold of a delicate gold chain that encircled her creamy throat.

"And were you two acquainted before you came here?"

"Oh, no; Miss Belle comes to my room and helps Mrs. Moorleigh dress my wounds, and she gave me this necklace."

"Because she was so patient when we nursed her," put in Miss Seaton, "and now, Mr. Lewis," she concluded, "with your permission I will play for Margoleen."

"You said you would," exclaimed the child with enthusiasm.

"Yes, dear, and this being the first opportunity, I will comply with my promise."

So, seating herself at the piano, she inquired: "What will you have me play for Margoleen?"

"I don't know. Give her Yankee Doodle, My Sweetheart is the Man in the Moon, or such like," suggested Ethan.

Complying with his request, she played Yankee Doodle, Golden Slippers, etc., whilst he watched the expression of the child's face to find that this style of music had failed to touch the responsive chord of her soul. Calling to Miss Belle, he requested her to play that beautiful and touching old song, "Kathleen Mavourneen."

Again studying the face of his ward, he discovered great teardrops well to her eyes, and

fall upon her heaving bosom, and before the song was ended he was compelled to carry her from the room in uncontrollable weeping.

"What makes you cry, Margie?" he whispered, as he carried her out. "I don't know," was all the answer he received. Yet he well understood that her soul was full to overflowing. This grand old song never fails to exert its power over the heart susceptible to sublime feelings.

It stirs the ashes of the past,
And fans the embers bright,
To read our conscience, mark our sins,
The candle it ignites.

Bathed in its influential dews,
We do no wilful wrong;
Yea, borne from earth each sordid thought
Enwrapted in this sweet song.

Who could resist the deep toned voice
That thrills the soul with love,
Sweet symbol of what life should be,
Lent from a world above.

The pathos in its wonderous strains,
Our deluged hearts reveal,
As trickling down e'en furrowed cheeks,
Balsamic tear-drops steal.

When Ethan went back, Miss Clifton told him that she feared he had made a bad selection in feminine greatness, since she thought his ward

had betrayed a shallowness in weeping over a sentimental, or love song.

"She is yet pure and unscathed by the deceitfulness of her more learned sex, or in other words, she has not yet learned the art of successfully hiding her real feelings."

"As the modest violet in the forest, fashioned by the hand of nature, she stands ready to sway or bend to each passing breeze. And do you really believe she loves music, Mr. Lewis?" she continued.

"That she has the power to fully appreciate it, I am confident."

"Upon what evidence do you base your opinion?"

"As I profess to be somewhat of a physiognomist, my opinion is well founded, and considering music a part of a refined education, that helps in moulding the heart and mind, I shall spare no pains in giving her the benefit of good teachers in this branch of training."

"And a great waste of money it will be," she answered, with a shrug of her well-rounded shoulders, "but pardon me, Mr. Lewis, I do not mean to dishearten you on a subject you seem so much enthused over, I only meant to tease you. I am sure you have a right to your own conjecture, but as prudence is said to be the

better part of valor, a little word of warning is sometimes necessary, and with the wise often sufficient. I trust you will not deem me presumptuous in offering friendly advice in the matter?''

He answered in the negative, yet the irritating smile that played around his strong mouth showed that his words belied his feelings. The conversation was here interrupted by a servant bringing in a salver of nice apples, whose deliciousness for the present drowned the venomous counsel of the designing heiress, and Ethan took this opportunity to absent himself, in order to calm his somewhat ruffled spirit, but soon reappeared to inform his mother and the girls that the sleigh was in waiting, and as Phil reigned the smoking bay steeds at the front door, his master assisted the ladies into the sleigh, tucked the buffalo robe over their laps, and with the shout, ''All off for a sleigh ride,'' gave the ponies a tap with his whip, sending them into a canter, which told that they too enjoyed the exhilerating air, glancing back he discovered a little pale face pressed against the window-pane, looking wistfully after them, which checked his hitherto flow of spirits.

''Mother,'' said he, ''suppose we drive back and get Margoleen.''

"Nonsense, Ethan, she is not strong enough to be out yet."

"I don't believe it would hurt her."

"It might cause her to be lame the remainder of the winter."

Thus dissuaded he rather recklessly urged the horses into a gallop, leaving the receding picture of Cuthbert soon lost to their view.

CHAPTER IX.

Haunted by the sad little face at the window, Ethan felt indisposed to protract their stay from home, consequently proposed an early return, but the earnest entreaty of his mother, coupled with an expressed desire from the heiress to go further, made it quite impolite to refuse their request, so he drove on until quite late before they turned their horses' heads towards home.

On reaching the grounds Tricksy, in breathless excitement, opened the gate to admit them.

"Hello Tricksy, what's the matter?" inquired the master, "your eyes look like new moons."

"Oh, Mars Ethan, Miss Margoleen done went and gone, and none of we'uns can't find her no whare tall. A ghost done tuck her off I know, boo-hoo-hoo," and the kind-hearted little negro cried aloud in her distress.

"Come Tricksy, what do you mean? Margoleen is in the house most assuredly."

"No, indeed, Mars Ethan, she ain't nuther, case I'se looked for her every whar."

"Where did you last see her?"

"I left her in her room. She sent me arter a pitcher of fresh water, and when I comed back, why, she was gone," and again she broke out crying.

By this time Mrs. Moorleigh, and Phil too, met them with the sad intelligence of Margoleen's disappearance.

Assisting the ladies from the sleigh, Ethan next hurried to the room of Margoleen to see if he could there find any clue to her mysterious flight. No trace was here visible, except the carpet was wrinkled as evidence of a struggle, and the pink ribbon which had confined her curls lay upon the floor, but upon further examination he discovered that a one horse cart had been driven from the side entrance, a passage seldom frequented by the family. So buckling a pair of pistols, which were well loaded, around his waist, and mounting a fresh steed, his brow clouded with vengeance, he took the trail, which, as he suspected, led down to their neighboring city, thence to a stable evidently kept by a low class of Irish, of whom he inquired, "Will you

tell me who it is that has just driven a one-horse vehicle here?''

''No, sir, we don't know his name, but a gentleman in nate attire but a short time since returned our horse and cart, which several hours previous he had hired to a portly lady.''

''Did you not learn their names, or where they reside?'' questioned Ethan.

''Not a bate of it sir, they paid us for the use of our wagon, and this was all we demanded, and would you wish the hire of a turnout sir? We have a dun mule that is truly fresh, since he has not been on the road now for these three days. Shall we hook him up for you? Your nag seems fagged.''

''No, I want no accommodations, only to be told where to find the Lowland Inn.''

''To be sure, and it's away down in the marshes, and be dad, sich a gentleman as ye self would not be after lodging at sech quarthers.''

''Be that as it may, will you be so kind as to give me the No. and street upon which I'm to find the Lowland Inn?''

''Here is the man to infarm ye,'' said a young muscular Irishman, who had hitherto sat in the background, but who now pushed his way through the crowd of loafers, and coming to the

front continued, "And 'tis the Lowland Inn ye are asking about, eh?"

"Yes sir," answered Ethan.

"Holy Moses, and 'tis the sweetest place on airth to me since me Biddie lives there, whose smile is sufficient to make me so happy that I niver care to see the back of me nake again, and with the promise that ye'll not be after casting the shapes eye at me fair one, I'll direct you the way se-ir."

"Trust me, Pat, I'll not stand in your way," he answered with a smile.

"And how did ye know me name was Pat?"

"Oh, I guessed it," he answered, this time impatiently.

"Well sir, you will find the Lowland Inn down the marshes, on Eighth street, but as ye be sech a good hand at guessing, I'll give you a little of it to do by leaving you to guess the number of the house yerself."

Ethan rode on, thinking that as he had learned the street he could perhaps find the house, when Irishman number one called to him that the house was numbered 170.

"Thank you," he shouted back, and touching his horse with his spur, rode rapidly on, but by the time he reached the designated spot it was quite late, nevertheless he could discern the

name, Lowland Inn, embossed in large gilt letters over the door, at which he loudly knocked.

A tall, rosy-cheeked girl, with heavy Irish tongue, made her appearance, and on being asked if Dinah Hicks lived there, answered that she had moved from there some ten days since, and that she and her mother were now the proprietors of the Inn. "Would ye wish lodging sir?" she inquired.

"No, not to-day, my good girl."

Accordingly she started to close him out, when realizing that he must fall upon some plan to detain her until he could glean some information respecting the whereabouts of the people he was seeking, and whom he suspected of having kidnapped Margoleen, he said to her, "Biddie, I saw your lover, Pat, a while ago."

"Indade sir," she answered, and a smile lit up her face.

"I certainly did, and he told me that your smile was sufficient to make him supremely happy."

"To be sure and Patrick is not the one to forget. Ah, sir, he ever remimbers his Biddie, and may the blessed Virgin kape him from harm."

"He is a handsome fellow, Biddie, and I must compliment your taste, as well as his, in the selection of a sweetheart."

"Thank you sir, indade."

Seeing that he had about paved the way to enlist her confidence, he said, "Biddie can't you tell me where Dinah Hicks now lives?"

"Well I can't say exactly sir, but that you will find them somewhere on the third square below here I am sure, and I learned that they have set up another boarding-house."

"Thank you, Biddie," and raising his hat he bowed politely and took his departure, while she went in and turned the key in the door after her. Feeling that it would be useless to hunt farther in the night, he went back home, but returned to the city very early the next morning and diligently resumed his search.

On and on he strode until reaching the most ancient portion of the city, where frequent conflagrations had made havoc with the combustible buildings, and where a fog equal to the London veil continually frowned upon the marshy shores of the river.

Closely he viewed each passing individual, and allowed his eager gaze to rest upon every house and signboard, until looking up at the third story window of a dilapidated house, he discovered the tear-stained face of his ward, who screamed as her eyes met his, "Oh, Mr. Lewis, here I am." Instantly Dinah, for indeed it was

she, clapped her rough red hand over the child's mouth, and rudely snatched her from the window.

CHAPTER X.

Springing up the steps to the main entrance, he pounded with unnatural strength upon the door, until the lock dropped from its long inhabited casing, leaving the rusty hinges to swing the shutter idly to and fro, while he bounded up the rickety stairs and gained the third story in time to arrest Dinah, whose egress was deterred by the child grasping and holding on to the door facing through which she had to pass in order to make her escape. With brawling threats and occasional blows, she endeavored to unclinch the fingers, but the poor little thing, as if her very life depended on the detention of that moment, clung resistently until her guardian came to her rescue.

"Hands off, fiend," he cried, with indignant fire shooting from his eyes, and throwing an arm of protection around the trembling form of his ward, he exclaimed, "this belongs to me, and I have a mind to deal with you as justice demands for your cruelty, only that you are a woman do I refrain from knocking you down; upon this plea do I let you go this time, but mark my

words, if ever you in any way again meddle with her, remember it will be at your peril. I would not be content to punish you to the extent of the law, but verily believe that with my own hands I would crush you into the earth."

Sullenly the vile perpetrator left the scene of action, and the child nervously clung to Ethan, as he carried her down, hailed a cab, tied his own horse to the rear, and set out for Cuthbert, while she explained how, when Tricksy had left her alone, Dinah stole in, tied a handkerchief over her mouth, and dragging her to the side entrance carried her off.

"Never mind, little one, she will not be likely to trouble you any more."

"Am I really to live at Cuthbert all the time?" (as if to be reassured of her good fortune) she asked.

"Yes, if you want to, but I have made arrangements for you to go away to school. How would you like that?"

"To go to school, learn books, and be a fine lady like Miss Belle?"

"To be sure," he answered, with an amused smile. "How would you like to learn music, Margoleen?"

"To sing, and play like Miss Belle, too?"

"Of course, don't you think you could learn to sing and play like her?"

"Oh, that would be so nice," said she, as her face lit up with pleasure, and her past sorrow was for the time forgotten. "Can I go to-morrow?" she asked in her enthusiasm.

"Oh, no, you must get over your lameness, and besides I must have you some new clothes made, and get you a large trunk to carry them in, before you go."

"But you've done bought me some new clothes. I've three new dresses besides this," she said, looking down at her frock, "and Mrs. Moorleigh is making me another one. I'm sure I can't wear any more."

"You need several to go from home to remain ten months."

"Ten months," she exclaimed, "and won't I see you no more for ten months?"

"Perhaps not for a longer term than this, as I contemplate traveling in the Western countries, but you may come home at the close of the session, and my mother will perhaps visit you during the time."

"Oh, I want to go to school, but do hate to leave Cuthbert, and I know I shall want to see you. Tears gathered in her eyes; abruptly he dropped the subject, and said: "Miss Belle is

going to leave us to-morrow, Margoleen, what do you think of this?''

''Where is she going?'' she inquired.

''She and the other young ladies are going home. Will you be sorry to see them leave?''

''I don't want any of them to go, but that big cliff woman, I don't like her.''

''You should not speak disrespectfully of Miss Clifton, Margoleen, but why do you dislike her?''

'' 'Cause she's mean.''

''What makes you say she is mean?''

'' 'Cause she laughed at me one day when I fell down, and she wouldn't hand me my crutch, that flew away, and when she meets me in the hall she turns her nose up, like I didn't smell good, Do you like her, Mr. Lewis?'' she questioned him.

''Oh, yes,'' he replied, turning his face from her, that she might not read the reverse. ''I don't want you to dislike her; you should school yourself to like everybody.''

''Well, I would like to know how I can do it. I hate Dinah, and I hate the old Cliff woman, too; yes I do, and I am glad she is going away, for she frowns at me every time I go where you are.''

''Well, let us not talk any more about her, now.''

"Oh, ain't this a sweet place," she said, as he now drew rein at his home, and handed her out to Phil, who cautiously carried her in, while the delighted Tricksy ran in front of him shouting the glad tidings of her return. Mrs. Lewis was enough interested to order clean clothes put upon her, and a nourishing repast served for her especial benefit, and the young ladies, except the heiress, who chanced to be quite busy packing for her departure just then, came in to congratulate the little wanderer upon her return home.

When evening came on, and the house was settled into its usual quiet, Mrs. Lewis sent for her son to come to her room as she wished to talk with him privately. Accordingly, he made his appearance, and drawing her chair close to his, she began the conversation, as follows:

"Well, Ethan, our visitors are to leave us to-morrow, and I am sure I shall miss them sadly, for I have enjoyed their stay, I assure you. How do you like them, son?"

"Oh, very much, mother; more especially, Miss Seaton."

"Why, Ethan, you will certainly admit that Miss Clifton eclipses Miss Seaton in every respect.

Indeed, no; I think Miss Seaton is certainly her superior in my opinion, and by the way,

mother, how would you like Miss Belle for your daughter-in-law?''

''Nonsense!'' she exclaimed as she stamped her foot, and an angry flush dyed her cheek, ''I would never consent to such absurd folly.''

''I should not term it folly to marry as deserving a girl as Belle Seaton. I am sure she would make some man a good wife, and I think a great deal of her,'' he concluded, with a grimace.

''But not so much that you would be silly enough to marry her.''

''Well, I am not so sure about that; I must take a little time to think about the matter. You seem so very anxious that I should marry, I would like to make up my mind to gratify your wishes, but repeat that I must have time to consider the matter, for really, mother, it does seem to me that people who marry should fully realize that their hearts are in unison before pledging themselves to each other, for marrying is a life-time business, and the right to call a woman wife seems a sacred trust to me, therefore, I feel that I must be more certain of my footing before making the uncertain leap into matrimony.''

''My son, I have sent for you to ask you to make me one promise.''

''What is it, mother?''

"Will you try to love Blanche Clifton, for my sake."

"If it will make you any happier, I will promise to try, but to be candid with you I don't think I could ever love, or even admire a woman of her disposition."

"You will see them to the city in the morning, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes."

The next morning, after taking leave of Mrs. Moorleigh, Margoleen and the servants, the Misses Lindsey, Belle Seaton and Mrs. Lewis were driven, by Phil, down to the city to catch the early train, while Ethan, according to his mother's suggestion, drove Miss Clifton in a separate buggy.

CHAPTER XI.

During their ride to the station, Miss Clifton felt that now was the time to make the most lasting impression upon the mind of the gentleman who sat by her side, looking quite handsome in his fur cap and deep collar of like material, hence she exerted herself to entertain him.

"Oh, Mr. Lewis, I do think Cuthbert the sweetest place I've ever visited," she exclaimed,

"and I am sure you ought to be proud that you are the master of this lovely home."

"Indeed, I am, Miss Blanche, for besides the knowledge of its grandeur, the fact that it was the home of my ancestors naturally endears it to me."

"The woman who is so fortunate as to call its master husband, should feel that fate had dealt a full share of happiness to her," she continued.

"I trust that if I am ever blessed with a wife, she may be of the opinion you express, at least."

"Won't you promise to invite me to your wedding, Mr. Lewis? Dogs like to at least eat the crumbs from the table of their betters."

Catching on to her ill-expressed idea, he evaded her meaning by checking his horse, consulting his watch, and saying, "Well here we are at the station, and in due time."

He threw back the buggy top and stepped out, while she braced herself against the back of the buggy, as if loth to give up her seat, and repeated, "Will you invite me to your wedding, Mr. Lewis?"

With a smile that bespoke his disgust, he answered, "Of course if I think of it, and if I don't perhaps my mother will, and now shall I assist you to alight?" he continued, as he broke

the wheels in a more convenient position, and proferred his hand to her. She suffered him to lift her out, and endeavored to talk upon other subjects, but that she was somewhat daunted by his uninterested manner was quite apparent.

Mrs. Lewis, who with the other girls had preceded them, sat waiting in the ladies room of the depot, until Ethan with Miss Clifton came in to fill up their number. Then going for their tickets he next came back, distributed the same, and seating himself in their midst informed them that it yet lacked twenty minutes of train time, which space was taken up by the girls expressing their delight with Cuthbert, promising their hostess a repeated visit in the near future, and insisting upon her making a visit to their homes.

"Mr. Lewis, do bring your mother to see me," urged Miss Clifton, "I am sure she would enjoy a visit to my Northern home, and I will take great pains to make her want to repeat it."

"Mother will have nothing to do but visit when Spring opens, and I trust she will avail herself of the opportunity, as I fear it will be lonely for her at home, since Margoleen will enter school, and I shall travel in the West for a time."

"You may count on me spending a good portion of my time with you, dear Blanche, since I

have no intention of moping alone during his absence," said his mother.

"Well, do come, Mrs. Lewis, and if Mr. Lewis has not started on his travels bring him with you, if he will condescend to visit us people of the North." And she gave him what she meant to be a persuasive look, but which was devoid of expression and faded from his mind like chaff before the wind.

"Young ladies, you must all come back again," said he, addressing the crowd; then turning to Miss Clifton, he added, "Miss Blanche, I shall depend on you to keep my mother interested while I am abroad."

"I will do my best," she answered, a little reassured by his request.

"And Miss Maud," he continued, addressing Miss Lindsey, "you and Miss Emma must remember to invite me when you get married."

The shrill scream of the cars was now heard, and going straight to Miss Seaton, whom he had purposely left out of this parting conversation, and whose understanding was not so obtuse as to imagine herself the slighted one, he drew her arm through his and said, "Miss Belle, your friendship acknowledges my right, on this particular occasion, to arm you to the car," and

without waiting her consent, he started with her, bidding the others follow.

"Miss Belle," he said, bending his head and speaking in an undertone, "you can't imagine how I hate to see you leave us; your stay has indeed been a source of pleasure to me, and I trust you like us well enough to come back to see us sometimes; when I return from my rambles I want to make you a visit."

"I will be glad to see you," she answered, "and when you come, bring Margoleen with you."

"Thank you, and I want you to grant me the friendly privilege of calling you by your given name."

"Certainly, Mr. Lewis."

"You may say Ethan, if you like," he replied.

"No," she said laughing, "I believe I prefer to say Mr. Lewis."

"Just so you remember me as your true friend, and will promise to answer an occasional letter I may write you," he concluded.

"I will," she said.

"All aboard," shouted the conductor, and as the engine stood hissing impatiently, Mrs. Lewis kissed her visitors good-bye and was left standing upon the platform, while her son went with them into the car, found comfortable seats, shook

the hand of each, and regained his mother's side in time to lift his cap while she waved her handkerchief at the moving train, that soon carried them from sight. Then turning to his mother, he said, "I have sent Phil around to the store to get a trunk, which I purchased a few days since for Margoleen, and as I wish her to be ready for school as soon as spring opens and she is able to start, I would like for you to select her wardrobe and engage a seamstress while we are here."

He gave her a check for $100.00, and while she did the shopping, he, after visiting the barber shop, purchased some cigars, went across to the hotel on the opposite side of the street, and joined with some young men of his acquaintance in a social smoke, where they discussed the topics of the day, and rivaled in telling jokes, until the city clock reminded him that the appointed time for him to drive to a certain store for his mother had arrived. So he at once had his horse brought round, directed Phil, who had returned with the trunk and was now in waiting, to follow on, and soon they found his mother, who with seamstress equipped to return with them, stood, each loaded with numerous boxes and bundles, which were soon stored away in the carriage driven by Phil; then putting his

mother and the seamstress, whom his mother introduced as Miss Yankton, into the buggy that had been occupied by the heiress and himself on their way down, he directed them to drive ahead of himself and Phil, who together rode among the goods and chattles.

"You may give Wilks the reins, mother; he is quite gentle and will carry you safely."

It was past dinner time when they reached home, but Mrs. Moorleigh had ordered their meal kept hot, and after a cup of coffee they felt refreshed.

Mrs. Lewis spent the remainder of the evening showing her purchases to Margoleen, and explaining to Miss Yankton, who was a tall maiden lady of unquestionable age, and who wore an ample supply of curls and frizzes, how she thought this new dress, and that new apron, and this sack, and that wrap would make up the most becoming.

Miss Yankton kept her curls and frizzes in motion with bows of assent to her suggestions, whilst Margoleen looked on in bewilderment, and said, "they are mighty pretty, but I can't wear all these clothes, I'm sure."

"Remember that you will be introduced into the school as Mr. Lewis' ward, and I trust, Margoleen, you will respect our standing enough to

dress yourself in a style to meet the approbation of tasty people,'' said Mrs. Lewis.

''Does Mr. Lewis want me to do nothing but dress?'' she asked.

''Of course he expects you to learn your books, but I'm sure he, as well as myself, would be very much disappointed to learn that his ward was untidy, or old-fashioned in her dress. You will have plenty of clothes, and if you don't dress as the occasions demand that you should, it will be your own fault, and contrary to my wishes, bear this in mind.''

CHAPTER XII.

Spring now endeavors to elude the grasp of winter, and myriads of birds chant the joyful message of her return.

The song sparrow in the hedge, pouring out his soul in ecstatic thrills and quavers, is but a symbol of the deep joy felt by all created beings. The beautiful blue-bird, which Emerson calls ''April's bird,'' is now seen resting motionless on the lowest branch of a tree, with apparently nothing in the way of work or duty upon his mind. The smallest movement in the grass beneath, however, attracts his attention, and his sure little beak rarely fails to seize the insect

working mischief there. Not far off, perhaps, is seen his demure little spouse, similarly engaged, while the jolly, frolicsome black-bird, feeling duty bound to lend his aid in heralding the glad tidings of liberation from cold weather's imprisonment, in his noisy crowd, without regard for the prim or proper, now rides the swaying branches of the loftiest trees, and pours forth his deafeniag strains.

A flush of golden sunlight bathes old earth this morning, as Ethan Lewis enrolls his ward as a pupil of a female college of noted repute, and which was at a distance of more than two hundred miles from his home. She is now sufficiently able to walk without the aid of her crutch, though her face is somewhat pale, which may be attributed to her tiresome journey.

"Margoleen," said her guardian, as he took her little white hand in his to say good-bye, "you must take a good rest before you enter the school-room, be obedient to your teachers and learn all you can, for I want to be proud of my little girl when I see her again; meanwhile, be careful of your health."

"I will," said she, and tears filled her eyes, as she stood with her hands clasped over the top of her head, a favorite position with children; and watched him depart.

The Superintendent walked with him to the college gate, listening to his instructions in regard to her education.

"I am more concerned about her learning music," than anything else," said he, "as I am confident she has a musical talent, and I would have you be particular in regard to her health. I do not think her constitution would admit of any exposure, or neglect."

"Certainly, Mr. Lewis, you may rest assured that your ward shall have due attention."

"Here," said Ethan, "I like to have forgotten to give you a little money. This," he continued, as he handed him several bills, "is to defray any little expense needful to her comfort, and now, sir," was his last injunction, "I wish you to be gentle with her, as I am certain that she is not of a disposition to be ruled by harshness. Kind reproof would be more efficient, I am sure," and bowing gracefully, he stepped into the waiting hack and was driven to the railroad station in time to catch the train that was to carry him back to his home. On nearing his grounds his ear was naturally turned to catch the sound of the happy, childish voice of his ward, who, with Tricksy at her heels, had made it a custom to meet him at the avenue gate, but, as this voice fails to greet him, a sin-

gular loneliness steals over his heart as he remembers that she is gone. Leisurely he walks on to the house, and as his gaze rests upon the stately edifice, with its beautiful surroundings, he asks himself the question: "Why am I so much of a Robinson Crusoe that I can't be satisfied to remain here? This lovely spot is dear to me, and yet, I am not content to stay upon it. I believe my mother was correct in presuming the society of young ladies to be a good remedy for my rambling propensities, for really, I am constrained to believe that I have been more content to remain at home since her visitors first came, than for five or more years previous. It now seems that their departure divests me of interest, and inclines me to resume my travel around the world. Yes, as soon as I can arrange business, I shall start."

His mother met him at the door, to say, "Hurry in, son; I want to read you a letter I have just received from dear Blanche, in which she gives me a pressing invitation to come as soon as I can make it convenient, and be certain to come prepared to spend the summer with her. What do you think about it, Ethan?"

"I see nothing to prevent you accepting the invitation, mother. You so often express a desire to see the Pine Grove Mansion, of which its

mistress loves so much to boast, I am sure you don't mean to miss this opportunity."

"Well, son, I was just thinking it would be such a nice trip for you and I. 'Tis true I have left you here alone a great many times heretofore, but am sorry to have been so inconsiderate, and really would be delighted to have you accompany me."

"Ahem, yes, just so, but you certainly don't mean that you want me to spend the summer at the house of Miss Clifton?"

"No, if you don't wish to remain under the same roof with your mother, you could at least stop near by, that I might have the pleasure of seeing you every day."

"I am sorry, mother, that I cannot accede to your wishes, but having made up my mind to shape my business, as early as possible, preparatory to a trip to the West, renders it impossible for me to accept your proposition. However, I will see you to your destination; I do not like for you to travel alone. Then too, this would afford me an opportunity to see Miss Belle again. On my return I could stop over in her town, and perhaps spend a few days, which is a delightful idea to me I assure you. Excellent! Name the day, mother, and I will be ready to accompany you, and you can remain until you see fit to visit

somewhere else, or come home and bring your chosen visitors to cheer you while I am absent."

"And how long do you contemplate staying abroad this time, Ethan," she inquired, knowing that when he once made up his mind to do a thing, that he was as impregnable as stone.

"I have no idea, but hope that you will enjoy yourself while I am away. I will write occasionally to keep you posted as to my whereabouts, so if you or my ward get sick you can summon me home. I trust mother that you and she will grow to love each other, and I leave it entirely to your discretion as to how often she comes home during her educational term; however, I would be glad for you to visit her as often as possible, as it would help to make her realize that she has friends."

Somewhat piqued at his refusal of her request to remain for the summer, at least, in the neighborhood of her ideal daughter-in-law, and also annoyed at his persistent preference for Belle Seaton, she answered, "I will go to see her occasionally, as the world would censure me if I did not respect my son's wishes to this extent, but you need not expect me to encumber myself with this child of unknown origin," and with an air of disdain she left his presence.

However, in a few weeks from this time they were en route to the home of the heiress, where he spent a day and night, then taking a final leave of his mother, whom he did not expect to see again for an indefinite time, he came by to see his friend, Miss Seaton, who made his stay so pleasant as to cause him to protract it for several days, and when at last he found it necessary to bid her good-bye, a pledge of eternal friendship was stamped upon their hearts.

"Friendship is borne by holy zephyrs from the height,
Where ever amaranthine bowers abide,
And odorous sweets are scattered far and wide
Whose perfume rare, celestial sense delights,
Whose glowing hues no blazing sunshine blights;
Comes earthward in our happy hearts to hide,
And into souls all desolate to glide.
An influence sweet that confidence invites,
Like angel presence in some wilderness,
Where footsteps faint tread hot the burning sands,
Whose hands to parched lips the nectar press,
It pours the balm each wounded heart demands,
Speak benedictions, that the spirit bless,
And lifts the fallen with its helpful hand." —A. P. A.

CHAPTER XIII.

All things being now in readiness, Ethan starts on his travels of indefinable duration. Vaguely his mind launches out into the uncertain future,

as on he goes in the vain search for real happiness. When I say *vain* search, I trust my reader will not deem me insensible to the blessings of earth, for, indeed, I believe that aside from the general harvest of bliss, that shall be gathered on the Celestial Plains, a few sheaves may be taken, even here, and should thankfully be waved in acknowledgment before the Lord.

The character to whom this subject relates, realizing the constant tapping at the door of his heart to be a call for something responsive to his soul, traverses the plains of distant lands, hoping to find solace for his restless spirit, and thus we leave him in his delusion and go back for a time to the little waif for whom this story is named.

"Margoleen, Margoleen," shrieked an ireful voice, "you laggard, why do you not come down; breakfast is over, and the bell rang for study hour sometime since, and you have never left the dormitory, what do you mean?"

And the red-haired school marm, with her bony hand (that was besprinkled with numerous freckles of unnatural size and color, also well skilled in the art of her design) gave the child a slap upon the cheek that would have felled her to the floor had not the friendly banister of the stairs supported her, and helped her to regain her equilibrum.

"I was sick last night, Miss Augusta."

"Never mind, I've learned how to treat you girls who feign sickness when you want to indulge in a morning nap. Go straight to the school-room. Another morning when you are up in time you can stop in the dining room."

"I don't care for any breakfast."

"None of your sass, march right on without uttering another word."

With her cheeks tingling with pain and indignation, she turned from her oppressor and descended the stairs to find Prof. Williams, the Superintendent, standing in the hall through which she had to pass on her way to the school-room, who beholding her flushed face and tearful eyes asked what ailed her.

"Professor," she answered, "I have not been well for several days. I was awake until after the clock struck twelve last night, and overslept myself this morning, consequently did not hear the bell," here she burst into tears.

"Well, well, come don't cry any more, are you so sick as this?"

"No sir, but I want to see Mr. Lewis; I cannot stay here longer, and I know he will take me home when I tell him."

"Tell him what, Margoleen? Why do you not love to stay here?"

"Miss Augusta is so mean to me; she scolds me when I don't deserve it, and she slapped me just now because I did not hear the bell to arise. Wont you write to Mr. Lewis, Professor, and tell him to come for me. I am sure he will take me home when he knows how unhappy I am here."

"Never mind, Margoleen, I'll see Miss Augusta about this; meantime I promise to give you a new teacher, whom I am confident you girls will love. My wife has concluded to take Miss Augusta's place in the school-room, and I do not think you will have cause to complain of her."

"Oh, I am so glad," she exclaimed, hastening on to confide the joyful news to the other girls, who were equally delighted with the idea of the exchange. Next morning her face glowed with pleasure as she entered the school-room to find Mrs. Williams seated in the chair that had formerly been occupied by Mrs. Augusta Vance, and who arose, and after a short prayer that touched the heart of all present, addressed them as follows:

"Miss Vance having left our employ, I suppose girls, you all understand that I am here to fill her place as your teacher. By the happy expression of your faces I feel that I am approved. Let us all now strive to do our duty. Your parents and friends have sent you here to learn,

and if you don't make good use of your opportunity, you will not only defraud them, but yourselves also. Then let us study when the hour demands it, and play with equal zeal at recreation. I hope to love you all, and trust that through a sense of duty to yourselves and love to your teacher you may be actuated to obedience. By obtaining an education, remember girls, you not only fit yourselves for society, but you also place yourselves in a position to be self-sustaining; then I admonish you, be not slothful in so important a matter."

This little speech strengthened the admiration of the girls for their teacher and inspired them with courage.

Margoleen, who had now apparently recovered from her previous indisposition, ventured to throw her arms around the neck of her new teacher and say in her impulsiveness, "Oh, Mrs. Williams, why have you not taught us before. I am sure I will love you very much, and will always try to obey you."

"Thank you, dear child, but it has never been in my power to teach since you came here. I used to assist my husband, but my health being rather delicate for some years past, he has prohibited me entering upon the duties of the school-room. Now that I am restored to almost

my normal standard of health, he consents for me to resume teaching, which is my favorite occupation."

The fact is the kind hearted Mrs. Williams had for some time been remonstrating with her husband in regard to this ill-natured woman, who by her fluent tongue beguiled him into employing her as a teacher, but her constant outbreaks of anger had not escaped the ear of his more amiable wife.

"Take notice to the rigid discipline with which she controls the girls in her room," she had remarked to her husband.

After this he was upon several occasions reminded of her words, and finally hearing her abuse to Margoleen, he discharged her, and consented for his wife to fill her place. From this time on Margoleen was under her supervision, whose warm and sunny nature, bedewed with love and kindness, caused the young mind, which now like the tiny rose-bud, peeped from its verdueous hull to expand and blossom into a beautiful flower.

Seven years had now passed since she entered this university, during which period she had never seen her guardian, but was occasionally allowed to read his letters, written to Professor Williams, in which he sent encouraging words

to strengthen her for the great work that lay before her. In one letter he had said, "Professor, tell my little ward that I am looking forward to seeing her an accomplished lady of noble purpose."

These words were ever uppermost in her mind. She realized him to be her true benefactor, and determined to stem the tide of difficulties and plant the flag of success to his desires.

Mrs. Lewis had annually visited her, each time replenishing her wardrobe to an extent that would have tickled the vanity of the average school girl, yet the invitation to go home on a visit was never given. True it was only a few short months that she had remained at Cuthbert, yet in this brief space of time she had learned to love it, and when vacation came round, and the other girls went to spend the summer months with their parents and friends, a homesickness crept over her that made her envy them the privilege. However, Mrs. Lewis always took leave without reference to her coming home, impressed the necessity of her improving her time, adding that she thought it quite unnecessary that she should come home until she had completed her education. "I am from home a great deal," she continued, "besides you will have advantages here, even during vaca-

tion, that you could not possibly have at Cuthbert, therefore I prefer you remaining here until you graduate, and now that we are on the subject (she said on her last visit) I want you to be sure to find out what kind of dresses your class-mates will wear on the last day of school and write me in due time, for I intend to have one made for you that will eclipse them all in its splendor. I am proud to see that my son's ward is growing to be quite pretty."

And thus comforted, she left her the last time before the eventful occasion of her life. The great examination was to take place at the close of the present term, which was only a few months off, and diligently did our heroine work to acquit herself with honors.

"I do not know that Mr. Lewis will be here on this occasion," she soliloquized, "yet, I shall endeavor to deport myself in a way that he will approve when he hears from me."

So intent was she upon her studies it was only a few days previous to the examination that she thought to comply with Mrs. Lewis' request to write her concerning her graduating dress. I do not know that it really makes any difference about me having a new dress for the occasion. I already have several nice white dresses, and I believe the girls are to wear white Swiss, but as

Mrs. Lewis requested it I suppose I must write. So she forthwith dispatched the desired message.

CHAPTER XIV.

Like the pendulum of a huge clock towering o'er a vast city, swings a warm June sun, ready to drop behind the western horizon. The much dreaded examination having been in session for the past three days, is at last over, and to-night the concluding exercises (that will close the school days of a large class of young ladies) will take place.

Margoleen Melbroke, whom we will designate a member of the above named, with pride and thankfulness looks at the gold medal that gleams upon her breast, bespeaking success and honor; yes, its appearance is acknowledged as significant of perfection in a thorough examination of her studies, and let us not brand her with vanity, but class her as only ordinary humanity, as she exults in the fact that she has not missed a word during this critical period.

As her muse runs upon the events of the occasion, she seats herself by the window of her room, and looking out at the beautiful sunset, recounts them and soliloquizes: "There is Nellie Dempsy's mother, cried for very joy to know

that her daughter could now go home and remain with her, and old Mr. Finch almost hugged Lizzie Givings and Ermine Stanley, his granddaughters, to death as he said, 'I have come this time to take my darlings home to stay.' Oh, the happy reunion for all save me. It seems that there is none to care whether I come home, or what becomes of me. My guardian does not seem to remember me, and his mother too has failed to attend our examination. I did think she would come, if for no other purpose than to superintend my toilet."

At this juncture the door-bell rang vigorously, and turning her ear to catch the sound, she recognizes the voice of the visitor to be that of Mrs. Lewis requesting to be led to the room of her son's ward, and as she ascended the stair the conversation between her and the usher was quite audible.

"And you say Miss Melbroke stood a good examination?" she interrogated.

"Certainly ma'am," was the reply. "No one here will be acquitted with higher honors; you should have attended the examination."

"Yes, really, I intended to, but circumstances rendered it impossible. However I have traveled all night in order to be here to the exhibition."

Margoleen arose and met her at the door with a kiss.

"Oh, dear," said the proud woman, as she surveyed the girl from head to foot, allowing her gaze to rest particularly upon the glittering medal on her bosom. "I am really proud of you, Margoleen; you get prettier every time I see you. With a little training you will be a star in society I am sure, and now tell me what part you have in the program for to-night?"

"I have been busy preparing for the examination, have given little thought to the exhibition, consequently have only the Valedictory assigned to me," was the reply.

"Your dress reached you all safe, did it not?"

"Oh, yes, and I had forgotten to thank you for it."

"How did you like it, Margoleen?"

"I never saw a more beautiful dress; really I feel that it is too elegant for me to wear."

"Have you never worn it?"

"No ma'am."

"Why Margoleen, you should have worn it one day at least. You surely understand that I went to the expense to have it made for this occasion," and the proud lady evinced her displeasure.

"Forgive me, Mrs. Lewis, I did not think you would care if I preferred to wear something else. My class-mates all wore dresses of less value. The blue dress you sent me some weeks ago I had never worn, so I chose this that I might dress similar to the other girls of my class."

"If you don't wear the new dress to-night, that cost me so much worry to get up, I shall feel quite hurt, as of course it will prove that you do not appreciate my trouble."

"Oh, certainly, dear Mrs. Lewis, I shall wear it to-night. Indeed I appreciate your kindness, and now that you are here I am anxious that you should see how nicely it fits me."

"Have you had any news from my son of late?"

"No, ma'am, he never writes to me, yet I had hoped he would be here on this particular occasion. Will he not come?"

"I suppose not, as he is yet from home, and I am entirely ignorant as to when he will return. However I received a letter from him about a month ago, asking me to be here at the examination, ready to take you home and introduce you into society, but think it would be perhaps best for you to remain at Cuthbert until next winter, 'that you may take a good rest,' says he, 'before she makes her debut, then you can take her to Washington, or some other city, where

under the banner of deceit and hypocrisy you may succeed in making her the belle of modern society.' But, Oh, my, Margoleen, she laughingly continued, as she arose to her feet, "you must learn to look over my son's peculiarities; he would indeed set a nice fashion for young ladies to pattern after, and were it left entirely to him to control their actions, a quaint set would enter the ranks of fashion; however, we can talk this over when we get home. Remember I desire you to look your prettiest to-night, and now we will go down to the reception room; my friend, Miss Clifton, is there. She came with me. I suppose you remember her, don't you, Margoleen?"

"Quite well," she answered, as the frowns and unkind remarks of the heiress came vividly before her mind.

Together they went to the parlor, where Mrs. Williams was endeavoring to entertain the lady in question, and as they neared the door, unperceived by the occupants of the room, she heard her kind teacher eulogizing her as follows:

"Margoleen is indeed a charge whom your friend may be proud to own; aside from her persevering, ambitious spirit, she is one of the most lovable girls I have ever known."

"Indeed," said her companion, as she arose

from her chair and bowed stiffly to the subject of their conversation, in which Mrs. Williams was so eulogistic.

That Margoleen's beauty was acknowledged by Miss Clifton with envy was quite apparent. A few moments later supper was announced, and as Mrs. Williams led the way to the dining-room she said to her pupil, "My dear, I am glad your friends are here to help me rejoice over your triumph, for I am sure you have been most victorious."

"Thank you, Mrs. Williams, I sincerely trust I may not cause you all to blush for me to-night."

The meal being over, the girls next repaired to their rooms and begun their toilet for the evening's entertainment. Mrs. Lewis sent up a message to know if Margoleen wished her assistance.

"No thank you," was the answer she received, "you must be tired from your journey and should lie down and take a rest. Mrs. Williams has promised to help me."

So this good lady conducted Mrs. Lewis and her friend to a private room, where they could rest whilst she helped her favorite to dress.

The folding doors between two large school-rooms were thrown open, making a spacious

apartment capacitated to seat quite a large audience. The stage was erected some three feet high, carpeted neatly, and beautifully decorated with flowers. The lamps being now lighted the people filed in and secured seats.

CHAPTER XV.

A large audience was now assembled, and although the crowd was so immense as to be uncomfortable, at the tap of the hand-bell the hum of voices was hushed to a quiet almost sufficient to hear a pin drop upon the floor, and Professor Williams stepped upon the rostrum to deliver the opening speech.

His first remarks were given to welcoming parents and friends, then after kindly thanking them for their patronage, he next addressed his school as follows:

"My dear pupils, as we all understand that this night disbands us for a time, perhaps some of us forever, I feel it my duty to say something to you on the subject of education, and as I think of nothing more adequate to the important topic than the much deserving lines of a writer, whose name I do not remember, I shall endeavor to give force to his remarks by repeating 'that an education will provide you with moral as well

as intellectual wealth, habits that shall render solitude sweet, sickness endurable, and age venerable, principles and affections that shall make life beautiful, and death a messenger of peace,' and while he continues to impress us with the importance of an education, he also admonishes us to beware of mistakes. 'At the commencement of almost every important enterprise,' says he, 'there are incumbrances to be removed. In some occupations this is the most serious part of the labor. To drain the morass, to clear the stones from a flinty glebe, or to extirpate, root and branch, the great trees of the forest, is a heavier toil than to guide the plow, or sow the seed, or garner the harvest.' So when we begin the great work of education, there may possibly be found, even in the fair area of the female mind, some weeds to be removed, some waste places to be renovated, ere the opening rose-bud can well meet the sunbeam, or the clustering grapes vigorously ripen. There are some mistakes easily made, but which, if adhesive, are both troublesome and hurtful—for instance, I have heard young people say, or seen them conduct themselves as if they thought, that to forget was no fault. Now if you lose what was entrusted to you to keep, whether it be a precept, a promise, or a coin, you commit an act of

unfaithfulness. The loss may be either your own, in the squandering of the fruits of knowledge, or that of others, who expected you to return their own with usury. Could not this have been prevented? Philosophy calls memory, but fixed attention, cannot you, therefore, so fix your attention, so charge the retentive power to be watchful and faithful, as to preserve what is gravely given to the mind's custody? If you can, there is blame in the forgetting what you are justly expected to remember. Consider it, then, as a fault, and acknowledge it as such. Never utter the phrase, 'I have forgotten,' without compunction, and a silent resolution to prevent, if possible, its recurrence. Memory is not an inert mass, but a gift to be cultivated. It holds the key of knowledge. Its pen writes the history of life, deeds, words, motives; by it scroll we shall be judged. Make a friend of memory. Commune with her, ere you sleep, of the doings of the past day. Deepen by her aid, what should be treasured for the future; axioms, principles, holy rules of conduct. Entrust to her guardianship those stores on which the mind is to feed in the winter of life, when the eye is dim, and the natural force abated. Yes, dear children, make a friend of memory. She will not forsake you at last. Hope folds her wing when the

grave opens. Her anchor was only made for the water-floods of time. But memory goes through the eternal gates. On her record, an unchanging doom is predicted. Make a friend of memory, for she is to live with us forever. Shall we still go on exploring mistakes, and seeking the way to avoid them? Some young people who would not assert that the negligence of habitual forgetfulness was venal, fall into a worse error of deeming it proper for parents to do much for them, and they little or nothing for parents. On what can this strange theory be founded? Where is the justice of imposing new burdens on those who already sustain many, so often wearied for your sake; where is the gratitude? And if there is neither justice nor gratitude in the course, what have spirits so true and lovely as your own, to do with it? Ah, no, I am sure you will repel the thought of such selfishness. With the light of every new morning inquire, not how you can repay their care and guardianship, for that is never to be repaid, but how you can best evince your appreciation of the debt. It would please me, if, at the close of the week, ere we parted for the sweet Sabbath rest, you would whisper in my ear some new service that you had learned to render your parents. Then I should feel that your scholastic and moral train-

ing were advancing hand-in-hand, and be comforted by the conviction that your hearts and minds were equally healthful and prosperous. Mistake third, that the common occupations of industry are vulgar, or that it is not quite ladylike to work with the hands. The hand is a very curious piece of mechanism. It was doubtless intended by its Maker for active and ingenious purposes. A man of no mean attainments has said that 'its structure might convince an infidel of the intricate wisdom of its architect. Look abroad and see what the hand of man has done on the earth, in its depths, and upon the broad sea, where white-winged navies ride. Had it slumbered in supineness, where, where, would have been the prosperity of—

> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself.

Woman's hand too, in its own quiet way, has wrought something for the world's welfare. Why should you withdraw yours from contributing its part in any fitting form of industrious occupation? Of Miss Edgeworth it was said by a familiar friend, 'that she could do skillfully with her hands everything that a woman ought to know how to do.' This versatility of knowledge and aptness for useful employment are

peculiarly appropriate to the simplicity that should prevail in a republic. Those are deceived in the character of a true lady who suppose it comprises helplessness, or ignorance of whatever her sex ought to understand and perform. Believe me inertness is not laudible, nor indolence graceful. Were it necessary, I could fortify the assertion by numerous examples from history, as well as personal observation. But I will not do you the injustice to suppose it possible for any of you to belong to that class of cyphers in the scale of being, whom an ancient and homely epitaph thus characterizes:

> Then if their tombstones, when they die,
> Arn't taught to flatter and to lie,
> There's nothing more that can be said
> Than that they ate up all their bread,
> Drank up their drink, and gone to bed.

Woman's mission on earth is not one of sloth and selfishness. It is alike her duty, her policy, and her happiness, to abandon weak indulgence, empty display, and inglorious ease. A poet truly says:

> There is a fire fly in the Southern clime
> That shineth only when upon the wing;
> So it is with our mind, if once we rest,
> We darken.

Clear away rubbish of false opinions, lest it end in wrong habits, make fair sea-room, that we

may sail together with a right reckoning, steering safe from shoals and quicksands, and so, through redeeming Mercy, find it at last the haven of perfect rest."

Consulting his watch, he continued, "I have spoken longer than I intended, but hope I have not wearied my hearers."

There was a unanimous cheer as he stepped down to give place for the dialogues, essays, select readings, etc., which followed in suit, until at last Miss Melbroke was called forward to deliver the Valedictory. All eyes eagerly watched for her who had not yet graced the stage. Presently a white shapely hand, devoid of ring, pushed back the curtain, and a vision of beauty came forth whom we recognize to be our heroine.

Softly she advanced near the front of the stage and bowed timidly, though gracefully, to the audience, who were spell-bound by her loveliness. Masses of gold brown hair, curling softly, was brushed back from her temples, whose white transparent skin was veined delicately like the petals of a rose; her features were faultless in their chiseled regularity, and her great violet eyes shone like luminous stars beneath their long dark lashes. Her white thule dress, looped with wreaths of jessamine, clung gracefully to her

perfect form. Such a serene maidenly figure it was, a pure personification of girlishness.

Mrs. Lewis, who with her friend sat near the front, could not repress her admiration, but involuntarily exclaimed, "Oh, Blanche, is she not lovely indeed?"

Whereupon Miss Clifton answered with a sneer, "Look, look, will you? I verily believe she is going to spoil all this loveliness by making a complete failure. It seems that she hasn't the power to open that beautiful mouth, poor thing. Do look, ha, ha (rather low)."

True enough Margoleen had dropped her eyes to the floor, while a deep blush dyed her cheek; however, it was only momentary. With a mighty effort she raised her head, and looking out upon the sea of faces before her, she caught the eye of a tall, broad-shouldered gentleman, who, apparently unable to find a seat, stood amid the throng in the back of the house, swinging a white straw hat, that was encircled with a wide black band, in his hand. One gleam from his compassionate eye lent inspiration, since she recognized him to be no other than her true benefactor, and thus strengthened she parted her lips, and with modulated voice and perfect elocution, delivered the farewell address, which was followed by unanimous applause and bouquets showered at her

feet, which so elated her guardian that (to the astonishment of his mother and Miss Clifton, whom he had not as yet seen, and who believed him in some remote corner of the Eastern Continent) he pushed his way through the crowded aisle, stepped upon the stage, gathered up the flowers that Margoleen had in her confusion forgotten, and with a bow of assent from Professor Williams, lifted the curtain and passed under.

CHAPTER XVI.

In hurried pursuit he walked down the corridor, at the back of the stage, until coming upon a group of chattering girls, both large and small, he stopped and viewed them sufficiently to ascertain that the object of his search was not in their midst, then asked if they could tell him where he could find Miss Melbroke.

"She's there in the back school-room," said a curly-haired little girl, pointing to a door that stood ajar further down the hallway.

On gaining its treshold, he hastily glanced around the room without discovering Margoleen, its only occupant, and had turned to retreat when some mysterious influence caused him to look back and espy her seated by the open window, her arm resting upon its sill, vigorously

plying a large palmetto fan, for it was indeed an excessively warm night. She had sought privacy here in order to hide her burning cheek, that so plainly portrayed unusual emotion, and was upbraiding herself for having allowed timidity to so overpower her as to disappoint him whom she had earnestly labored to please. In her innocence she did not realize that her modesty had lent an additional charm to her delivery, for its reality was plainly stamped upon her features, but with deep remorse she remembered that when she first walked upon the stage her embarrassment was so great as to prevent her uttering a word for several minutes.

"How very silly I must have looked," she mused, and heeded not the solicitations to reappear, feeling that the clapping of hands was perhaps more of ridicule than applause.

Unconscious of her guardian's presence, she looked out upon the moon, "that regal queen of night," and watching her career amid her glittering court, high in the arch of heaven, sadly and audibly ejaculated, "Have I been most fortunate or unfortunate in this life?"

"Let us trust to the predominancy of your good fortune," said a well remembered voice, and proffering his disengaged hand, continued, "Well, now, am I expected to shower congratu-

lations upon you, as the people so lavishly did these flowers which you unappreciatively walked over? Margie do you know me?''

''Certainly, it is Mr. Lewis,'' she answered smiling, as he shook her hand and detected, though she smiled, teardrops glittering upon her long dark lashes.

''I am so very sorry to have made the failure,'' she said, as her eyes sought the floor.

''Oh, you did as well as I expected, quite as well, I assure you. Are these flowers not tokens of approval?''

''I suppose so, but were they really meant for me?''

''Most assuredly they were, so relieve me of them please.''

''Yes sir, I will take them to my room and put them in water; you will excuse me until I do so?''

''We will lay them here on this bench; they wont spoil until we talk a little,'' said he, emptying an armful of bouquets, and seating himself upon the bench beside her.

''Well, Margoleen, will you be glad to go home?''

''Yes sir, if you mean Cuthbert, I shall be most happy to be there once more, if only for a short time. I believe Tricksy would remember

me, sir; and would like you to promise that if I am ever able to buy her you will sell her to me."

"Sell her to you? How much will you give me for her, Margoleen?"

"Oh, I could not give you anything for her now, but when I have made some money of my own, I should like to buy her."

"And how do you expect to make your money?"

"By teaching, of course, and now let me thank you with my whole heart for your kindness to me, a poor outcast. Oh, Mr. Lewis, if you only knew how I wish it was in my power to remunerate you."

"Well, indeed, I am afraid if I have to depend on your teaching I shan't get half Tricksy's value."

"Why do you say this, sir? I am sure I have worked faithfully to qualify myself, and shall most certainly apply for a situation as soon as—as—as—"

"As what, Margoleen?"

"As soon as I have seen Cuthbert and rested awhile."

"If you mean to teach school, I should judge you incompetent, therefore would not give my consent," said he, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

"You may be deceived in me," she argued; "true there is a great deal for me to learn, yet I

am compelled to make my living, and I know that I am capable of teaching any branch of study I should undertake. In addition to your other kind deeds, will you help me to procure a situation?''

''Yes; with no bad luck, to-morrow morning I shall start with you to Cuthbert, and situate you there in your home, until some worthy man shall claim your hand in marriage. I shall not prevent you visiting, or spending a portion of your time in sight-seeing; the only way by which you can remunerate me is, never again to intimate that you are under obligation to me. I consider my oath to protect you, obligatory, yea most sacred. I want you to be as free and happy at Cuthbert as if it was inherited from your parents, and remember that I shall always be a father to you as nearly as lies within me. May your brow ever be as free from clouds of sorrow as it appears now, Margie, but should it ever be otherwise, you would greatly incur my displeasure by hesitating to come to me in your distresses.''

''Thank you, my dear guardian, I feel that I am most fortunate in possessing so true a benefactor, and shall endeavor to please you always.''

''Well, there is one request I wish to make of you, which I have formed an opinion, will be

rather difficult for you to grant, and that is, to *always* respect my mother's fastidious whims, or at least bear with them; she is my mother and—''

This sentence was left unfinished, as the conversation was interrupted by the appearance of two ladies, whom we recognize as Mrs. Lewis, and her friend, Miss Clifton.

''Oh, my dear son,'' exclaimed the former, hurriedly advancing toward him, whilst the heiress slowly and gracefully came on. ''Why on earth did you not write me that you would be here?''

''Mother,'' said he, meeting and kissing her, ''I did not know that you were under this roof, since I made inquiry and was informed that you failed to come to the examination; however, I am truly glad to see you. Our circle fully formed, Margoleen, you, and myself, will have a happy reunion at old Cuthbert to-morrow.'' And a ray of pleasure shone on his face.

''Yes, son, and here is dear Blanche.''

''Welcome back, stranger,'' said the lady in question, proffering her hand. ''I do not think you would have seen me at all, had your mother not called your attention to the fact that I stood in your midst; nevertheless I am glad to see you.''

"I certainly was aware of your presence, Miss Blanche, and conscious of the fact that your time was to come next," said he, accepting her outstretched hand, "how have you enjoyed the exhibition?"

"Very much, but it grew very tiresome towards the last."

"The last part was the most interesting to me," said Mrs. Lewis. "I am charmed with Margoleen's success, and must kiss her by way of congratulation."

Going over to where the girl now stood by the window, she imprinted a kiss upon her cheek and whispered, "My darling, you made me so proud of you to-night, and your dress indeed becomes you. When we get home I shall have you several fashionable dresses made, and we will go to Washington, where you shall make your debut. Do you agree, son?"

"Blanche thinks it would be nice for us to go North for the remainder of the summer; what think you of this?"

"Yes I would like them to go home with me," said the heiress. "My home would welcome your newly blown rose among the Pines; what say you, Mr. Lewis?"

"Thanks for your kind invitation, but I think our little band would be happier to spend the

summer months in a quiet rest at home; however, I shall leave it to mother and Margoleen as to where they spend their time. I do not mean to be exacting, but as for myself I feel that my presence is needed at Cuthbert, for a time, at least."

"Ethan has been from home so long I feel that I am compelled to remain at home with him this summer, but of course you too will stay with us, Blanche?"

"Don't you suppose that I am never in demand at home? My servants will get entirely from under my control, I am from home so much; yet, I find it impossible to refuse my dear friend."

"Then you agree to go back to Cuthbert and remain for the summer with us? I should die without you, Blanche?"

"Well as I don't wish to be your murderess I must of course consent to accompany you back, though I came here with the intention of going back home."

"Margoleen, have you completed your packing preparatory to going home to-morrow?"

"No sir, but I can do it to-night."

"Very well, but as it is now quite late you had best be at work; we will have to rise early in order to catch the morning train, so we will excuse you while we make ready to go over to

the hotel. Good-night," he continued, "don't sit up too long; I am sorry you can't rest one day before we start, but I think it best to go to-morrow; I am quite anxious to see you all at home once more. I will come over for you early; don't fail to be ready."

Bowing, she left the room, while Ethan escorted his mother and Miss Clifton over to the hotel which stood near by, and after seeing them safely quartered, went to his room, threw himself into a chair, lit a cigar, and for more than an hour gave himself up to deep reflection.

"What have I lived for? for what was man created?" ran his musings. "In reality, is life but a bubble?"

A retrospect of the past made his every act and thought seem tame and insipid in comparison with the new sensation that thrilled him to-night. Memory evoked phantoms that caused him to weep over the sod where the blossoms fell early, and the poem came to his mind,

"Oh, memory, why reproach me so,
With shadows of the past,
The thrilling hopes of long ago
That came and went so fast?"

His first ideal of woman had long years ago passed from earth to heaven. They were school-

mates, and in the rosebud of girlish loveliness, she had died without hearing from his lips a declaration of his love; yet, he had cherished her memory so much that he had never placed his affections upon another; in fact, nothing, until to-night, had ever awakened the long slumbering passion of his strong and noble manhood. Margoleen Melbroke now enthroned herself in his heart. But, ah! he realized the discrepancy in their ages. "Could the young heart but twine its tendrils around a sturdy oak?" he soliloquized, "but no—get back, vain tempter, it would be folly to entertain such thought—she could not love a man who is old enough to be her father, and I would not be so ignoble as to taunt her with my affections. I pray only for power to crush or hide from her my true sentiment, that I may faithfully discharge my duty in the capacity assumed, as her protector."

As he sits and ponders the above, let us look in upon Blanche Clifton, who, assured that her room mate was asleep, crept softly to the window and looking out upon the starry heavens, that would have softened the heart of any good woman, grated her teeth, and planned the destruction of Margoleen, whom she acknowledged to be her formidable rival.

CHAPTER XVII.

The following day dawned just as bright, the sun mounted the sky with equal pride and splendor, the people moved in the same routine adown the highway of life, as if a deep, dark plot had not been laid to wreck the lives of Ethan Lewis and Margoleen Melbroke.

At four o'clock P. M., Mrs. Moorleigh, catching the sound of carriage wheels upon the graveled drive, laid aside her knitting, arranged the chairs in the room, swept the hearth, and glancing up at the clock, ejaculated, "if that be our party, Phil has made better time than I expected!" Going to the door, she ascertained that indeed it was no other than the long-absent master, who, in company with three ladies, had arrived.

Aunt Silvie, the negro cook, (who was acknowledged by the family to be a very important personage) with her hands resting upon her hips and her pipe in her mouth, stood upon the kitchen doorstep complacently watching the blue-tailed pigeons soar over her head, then light down upon the chicken-trough, and with impertinence dip their bills into the water (which she had but a few moments previous poured out to her favorite biddies), when hearing the exclamation hoa! from Phil, she shielded her eyes

from the sun with her hand, and looking down towards the front gate discovered her master hand not only two ladies from the carriage, but a third one.

"Come here, Tricksy, honey," she turned her head back towards the kitchen door and called, as Ethan led the way toward the house.

"Aint dat ar 'oman walking next to Mars Ethan de same sorrel-top hypocrite as lef here wid missus?"

"Yes, ma'am, that is surely Miss Blanche," decided Tricksy.

"Lands sakes," said the now disconcerted old woman, "what de name o' common sense Miss Ira wanter fetch dat 'oman back here fur, God knows I don't wanter cook for her; all de angels nor saints nuther couldn't please her; besides, pears ter me, Miss Ira don't need her here now, since Mars Ethan and de little miss done both comed, dat's company nough sholy. I don't like dat medley 'oman no ways, bound she turns dis house upside down fore she leaves here. I tell you, Tricksy, I don't like her neuvering; dis old nigger aint lived alwaus for nuffin; jis listen ter what I tell you, chile, and you'll see dis old 'oman aint fooled ebry day."

And tossing her head with an air of confident wisdom, with lip pouched, and the disengaged

corner of her white head-rag fluttering high in the warm summer breeze, she walked across the back yard to her cabin, where seated upon the ground, in front of the door, were several little negro boys, and in a voice that they well understood signified she was not in a very good humor, she said to them, "You ternal niggers what you mean setting thar playing in dat dirt; don't you spose I never gits tired working, just look at dem shirts; git up from dar dis minute and fetch me plenty chips in de kitchen, dars more company folks here for supper."

"Who'es here?" ventured one to say.

"Neber you mind nigger, you go and do as you am told; childun got no business poking dey bills inter grown folks affairs;" (aside) "but 'tis downright certain I'se got one more than I wus inspecting to git supper fur, and one that I haint got no time for nuther."

However, when her master went out to the kitchen and shook hands with his old cook, inquiring how each of her girls and boys were getting along, a happy smile once more illumined her sleek face, dispelling for the time her former annoyance. She loved her master, and when supper came on, she thought of no way that she could better express her appreciation of him than by placing a well cooked meal, composed of

things she remembered to have been his favorite viands, nor did he fail to return the compliment by eating a hearty supper, and as he arose from the table, spoke in a tone loud enough to reach the ear of Aunt Silvie (for whom the compliment was intended), that he verily believed he had the best cook in the State, and that he feared if he stayed at home too long, he would kill himself eating; Aunt Silvie understood so well just what suited his taste. The old woman was amply repaid by this eulogy, and thought if all the rest of the household were as easily pleased as was her master, she would indeed be blessed.

But let us go back to the ladies, who after having been ushered into the sitting room by Mrs. Moorleigh, were next shown to their respective rooms, where they might divest themselves of their traveling apparel, and dress for supper. Miss Clifton was to occupy the room she had formerly chosen, which was a large chamber in the west wing of the house, immediately over the sitting-room, with two separate stairways, one leading down through the front hall, the other from a side passage, thence to a small narrow porch on the side of the house next to the large dense orchard. Its walls were hung with dark green paper, festooned with golden tinsel. The carpet was of rich green velvet, stamped

with large yellow poppies, whilst the tapestry that o'erhung the windows, and the other adorning of the room, corresponded in color and elaborateness. This room was designated as the green room, and was held in reserve by Mrs. Lewis for her favorite lady visitors. So Miss Clifton, having been always an especial favorite, did not consider that she was usurping authority when she said, "I shall of course have the green room."

"Certainly, Blanche, Mrs. Moorleigh will see you up to your room while I show Margoleen to hers."

Our heroine was delighted to find Tricksy (who was now a tall, intelligent looking girl, seventeen years of age) standing in the doorway, ready as of old to serve her as maid. She carried her mistress' wraps, or luggage, to the room that by her own faithful hands had been converted into almost a fairy bower. This apartment was on the same floor as was the green room, but on the opposite side of the hall, several doors nearer to the front stairway. The furniture was pretty, yet not gorgeous; bright, cheerful hangings were the adornments. The carpet was a light Brussels, stamped with delicate pink rose-buds, and leaves that contrasted beautifully with the light colored wall paper,

whilst, reflected in the large mirrors of both dresser and washstand, were the beautiful and fragrant bouquets, which by her thoughtful maid had been gathered and placed thereon. The large bay-window that looked out upon the flower garden (beyond which stretched a large green meadow, where herds of fat cattle browsed the banks of the creek that gleamed in the summer sunlight), was draped with cream colored lace curtains, looped back by bows of pink ribbon.

"This is to be your room, *exclusively*," said Mrs. Lewis, "and remember, Margoleen, you are to feel that you are at home in my son's house."

"Thank you," and before she had time to say more, the lady of the house had closed the door and hurried on to see about her pet—Miss Clifton.

It was now time for Tricksy to express her pleasure at seeing her beloved young mistress at home once more. In fact it had been most difficult to control the tears of joy that now flowed freely down her cheeks, while kneeling, and caressing Margoleen around the ankles, she expressed her happiness to see her once more.

"I am equally glad to see you, Tricksy, and believe you to be as true a friend as I have."

"I would do anything to serve you Miss Margoleen, and hope you will always take me with you, hereafter."

"As long as I can keep you with me, Tricksy, I shall certainly do so, as I feel that I can trust you. So now get up, wipe your eyes, and bring my trunk key from my hand-satchel; 'tis time I was ready to go down, as Mrs. Moorleigh said supper would be served early."

Obeying her mistress, she brought the key, and thence had, not only the pleasure of watching her lovely young mistress prepare her evening toilet, but her eyes danced with delight when drawing forth a bright blue ribbon sash, some three yards or more in length, and ten or twelve inches wide, Margoleen said, "here, Tricksy, is a present I have brought to you; wear it, and you will be certain to catch a sweetheart."

"O! how pretty, thank you; but indeed, Miss Margoleen, I already has a sweetheart."

"You have? Tricksy, ar'nt you young to have lost your heart?"

"Yes'm, I s'pose I is, but I'se got one and will tell you all about him some time; he's named Jim."

"Jim," repeated Margoleen, and the bell announced supper.

"Open the door, Tricksy, I shall now go

down,'' she said, as she stroked her hair with the brush, and next descended the stair.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Who of you ladies are fond of horseback riding?'' asked Ethan that night at the supper table.

"I used to be, but have long since put by such foolishness,'' his mother was first to make reply.

"And you, Miss Blanche, how do you like it?''

"For my part,'' she answered with a slight sneer, "it requires too much physical strength for me; besides it always looked vulgar to me to see a lady on the horse's back; give me a carriage instead.''

"'Tis your turn, Margoleen; what have you to say on the subject? I ask, how do you like to ride horseback?''

"As I don't remember to have ever been on the back of a horse, I don't suppose I'm really capable of expressing an opinion.''

"Do you think you would like to learn to ride?''

"I believe I would. I have seen ladies on horseback who I thought looked very nice; and I am sure they appeared to enjoy it.''

"Well, if you will be ready, and on the West balcony when the clock strikes four, to-morrow morning, I shall give you a first lesson in equestrianship; what say you?"

"I would be delighted, but how shall I prepare? I have no habit."

"I'll tell you, Margoleen. send Tricksy to the garret, and there, hanging among my discarded dresses, she will find a blue habit I wore years ago; I expect it will just fit you."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lewis; I shall go right now and send Tricksy to hunt it."

With face beaming with girlish delight, she asked to be excused, left the table, ran up to her room, summoned her maid and forthwith dispatched her for the desired article, which was soon found and brought to her. The heiress now felt vexed at having expressed herself as not liking to ride on horseback. "He might have intended to ask me to accompany him," she mused, as Mrs. Lewis spoke of the pleasure Ethan's suggestion had created in the young face, and while the subject of her remarks, with Tricksy's assistance was busily engaged, brushing and shaking out the folds of the long neglected habit.

"Look there in my hat-box, Tricksy; I have a cap that I think will correspond with this

habit.'' The little blue cap, trimmed with tinsel cord, suited exactly.

''Aint you going to try the habit on?'' asked Tricksy.

''Not now, I must first go down to the sitting-room, and when I come back will try it on, so if there be any alteration to make we can do it before we retire.''

However, as they had traveled some distance that day, bed-time was announced early. Margoleen was soon back in her room to hastily array herself and find that the habit was much too large in the waist for her.

''What shall I do to it, Tricksy?'' she inquired, as she looked into her mirror and beheld the bagging costume.

''I don't know what to tell you, less you put it on wrong side out and let me kinder pinch it up wid my fingers and sew it inside de whalebones.''

Tricksy's suggestions were acceded to and soon the costume was thrown across the back of the chair, ready for an early toilet the following morning, and the one who was to wear it, in bed dreaming of the eventful occasion.

''Wake me early,'' was her last injunction ere Morpheus received her in embrace. With heart unsullied with care she slept sweetly until Tricksy

gently shook her arm and said, "Miss Margoleen, de roosteers am all crowing fur day, spec you had better get up if yer wanter ride."

She immediately sprang from her bed, hastened to make ready, and at the appointed hour stood upon the balcony; nor did she have to wait long, for it was only a few seconds until her guardian, equipped for the ride, came out, and as he surveyed her, laughing said, "Good-morning, riding-habit, are you sure you contain Miss Melbroke?"

A blush suffused her cheek at the intimation of her's and Tricksy's failure to make a fit, nevertheless she gathered courage to answer, "Tricksy and I did the best we could, you would not expect us to be Paris modistes, would you?"

"Certainly not, forgive my charging remark, I am sure it looks quite well. Come, here are the horses, let us be off; lead them a little closer, Phil, there, that will do; up you go, Margie, am glad you are not so squeemish as to miss what I consider one of the greatest pleasures of life, a horse-back ride." Handing her the bridle and whip, he continued, "Sit up straight, I think I can learn you to be a graceful rider; lead aside and hold him, Phil, until I can mount."

The beautiful dapple-gray, whose glossy coat signified a frequent application of curry-comb

and brush, was led aside while he mounted on the other horse, a spirited blood-bay, and gaining her side said, "Let go his mane, Margoleen, take the reins in your left hand and whip in your right; you don't feel afraid of him, do you?"

"Not much."

"Well, here we go, mind you don't fall off." And tapping each horse with his own whip, they started at a moderate gait.

The birds were still warbling their early songs. The sun was not yet above the eastern horizon, dewdrops glistened upon flower and leaf. The cool, invigorating air of the early morning contrasted greatly with the heat of the later hours of the day. On and on they rode with increasing speed until our heroine began to feel quite at home in the saddle, when at length he said he expected they had best turn back, as breakfast would probably be ready by the time they reached home. On their way back he asked how she enjoyed her ride, and how she liked Dido (alluding to the animal she rode).

"Very much indeed, and must thank you for this morning's pleasure."

"You needn't mind to do that," said he, "but I am glad you are pleased with Dido, since I bought him for your especial benefit; he is yours, Margoleen; I make you a present of him."

A tear stood in her eye, and for a time she did not speak. "'Tis hard that I'm not allowed to thank you when my heart overflows with gratitute," she at length ejaculated; "I am more than proud of the gift."

"Well prove it by being ready to repeat this ride at the same hour to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Lewis and her friend met them at the door to inquire how she liked to ride on horseback.

"I don't think I ever enjoyed anything more in my life; and what do you think, my dear guardian says he bought Dido expressly for me; was there ever another as good man on earth? I want you, and Miss Blanche too, to try my horse, Mrs. Lewis, I'm sure you will love to ride when you once try him."

And away she ran to her room, as Mrs. Lewis said, "Her cheeks are as red as roses, but that habit does look *too funny.* I would have supposed her to have been nearer my size and form than that; she must have a new one if she intends to ride."

Margoleen was too far to hear her remark, yet Ethan answered, "You suggest the thought, mother; suppose you order one for her at your earliest convenience."

"Very well, I think I shall go down to the

city to-day, anyway; would you like to accompany us, Blanche?''

''Certainly.''

''You, too, will go with us, won't you, son?''

''No, I'm slightly affected with headache this morning; Phil can drive you ladies down, and bring you back safely.''

''Yes, well, have the carriage brought around early, as I wish to take Margoleen to several places; it will take quite all day to do my shopping; besides 'tis too warm to wait late to start.''

''Promptly at eight the carriage will be at the door; inform Margoleen that she may be ready in time.''

After breakfast Miss Clifton said to her hostess, ''If you will excuse me, I believe I won't go to-day as 'tis so warm, and I would like to answer some letters.''

''I dislike to leave you behind, Blanche, I fear you will be lonely, besides we will miss the pleasure of your most excellent company; yet if you prefer to remain at home, I will excuse you with the promise that you have the servants wait upon you well and don't have the blues so bad that you will be ready to cry homesick when I return; for you have promised, remember, to remain with me until next spring, and we may accomplish wonders in that time,'' she whis-

pered. "I know 'tis dull here for one who is accustomed to gay society as you are, but we are going to break the monotany pretty soon by having a lawn party, and 'tis in view of the occasion is one thing that carries me to the city to-day; Ethan is a poor hand to get up anything of the kind, and of course I shall have to call on you to help me; so get to work, think out the program for the evening; and I will bring my pet something nice when I return."

The carriage moved off, leaving Ethan and Miss Clifton, who had accompanied them out. Together they walked back to the veranda, when the heiress dropped into a rustic chair and said, "'Tis so warm, I dislike to stay indoors. What have you to say about our lawn party, Mr. Lewis; do you think you would enjoy it?"

Pushing a toad from the veranda step with the toe of his boot, and seating himself thereon, he answered, "As for myself I'm getting too old to enjoy such occasions much; yet *I have* been thinking of having an entertainment of some kind, and have at least the young folks of the vicinity to come in, that my ward, who is now a grown girl, may make their acquaintance; this is her home, and yet she is entirely ignorant of its surroundings. Could you not suggest something that would best suit a girl of her taste and

accomplishments? Do you really think a lawn party would be appropriate; would the ladies not be liable to take cold out on the dewy grass; would it not be best to have the entertainment indoors?''

Miss Clifton silently grated her teeth and answered, ''You are not so very many years my senior, and I don't consider that I'm too old to enjoy parties.''

''We could not expect to class ourselves with her age, at least,'' said he.

CHAPTER XIX.

Hope was renewed by his answer, as it suggested the thought that he, perhaps after all, considered Margoleen only a child, and realized that the discrepancy in their ages would ill mate them as husband and wife.

''Yes, a child such as Margoleen appears to be would, I suppose, naturally enjoy frivolity that would be void of pleasure to us; we will let Mrs. Lewis decide what kind of entertainment would best suit her, and you and I can sit by and watch the effect. But as a true friend to you and to your mother whom I love so dearly, I have a secret to confide to you, Mr. Lewis, one that concerns the honor of your family too.''

"What on earth, what have you to tell, Miss Blanche?"

"Well trust me that it is in consideration of your mother more than all else that I wish to open your eyes."

"Go on please, don't keep me in suspense."

"Believe me as your friend, I know truly that you are harboring beneath your roof one who is of low birth; Margoleen Melbroke is of the *scum* of the earth."

"You are mistaken in this," he answered with clouded brow, "I have good evidence to believe her parents were respectable people. Her father was lost in a shipwreck, and her poor mother, as Margoleen well remembers, died of grief for her husband, while on board a steamer. I would have no such insinuations reach the ears of my ward, for I am thoroughly convinced of its invalidity; therefore, beg you never to mention the subject again."

He now arose, and with hands thrust deep into his trowser pockets, was walking a measured tread across the porch floor, when at length he turned abruptly to go into the house.

"Stay, Mr. Lewis, hear me through; I repeat that I know her to be most unworthy in more particulars than one, and some day will prove my statement clearly to you."

"Enough, Miss Clifton, I decline to listen further; excuse me, please," and going to his room he opened a newspaper, stretched himself upon a couch in front of the large open window, and endeavored to put this idle talk from his mind. He did not believe a word of it, yet the thought haunted and stung him deeply.

"My precious—yes, I will say precious—Margoleen could never have descended from low, vulgar people. The thought of her being anything but purity, shall never be entertained."

And thus he mused until he finally dropped off to sleep, nor did he awake until the sound of the dinner bell aroused him. On entering the dining room he found his sole companion to be the heiress, seated at the head of the table faultlessly arrayed in dinner costume, and as he took his seat vis-a-vis, she smilingly said, "you appeared out of humor when you left me this morning; see, I am at the head of your table, and as a treaty of peace between us, offer to serve your coffee; so, if you wish plenty of sugar, allege that we are still friends, I am sure I meant no offense (her hand on the sugar spoon).

"I am not the one to treat my mother's company with disrespect, Miss Clifton, but must say I will be grateful if you will never mention

the subject of this morning again; would you have some of this roast?''

''If you please, sir.''

Her plate was handed, by the servant, to him.

''What has become of Madam Moorleigh?'' he questioned.

''She is in bed with headache,'' was the reply.

''I am sorry she is sick, and will go in to see her when I shall have finished eating.''

The subject next drifted to Miss Belle Seaton and the Lindsey girls.

''When did you see or hear from Belle Seaton?'' asked she.

''I came by her home on my return from the West, and I occasionally get a letter from her; I received one yesterday.''

''Ah! and how is she?''

''Quite well and happy, she writes.

''She has never married, I presume?''

''No; but she tells me in her last letter that Miss Maud Lindsey has just been married to quite a wealthy gentleman from the South, by the name of Headley—Frank Headley—I think is his name. He has a large plantation, a number of slaves, and deals extensively in cotton.''

''And Emma; what has become of her?''

''Oh, Miss Emma, so Miss Belle informed me,

married a Mr. Brevere of Chicago, some four or five years since."

"And did she too, do well?"

"I suppose she did; her husband is a wholesale druggist of that city. But how is it that you are not posted about these ladies? I presumed when you all came here together visiting, that you were friends and acquaintances."

"No, no; I knew but little of those girls before we met here, on my first visit. They never write to me; in fact, I have but few correspondents among the ladies, I can't find time to write so much. The Lindsey girls I remember to have been very pretty and sweet, while Belle Seaton was neither pretty nor attractive; don't you think she was rather ordinary?"

"Indeed! I think her most extraordinary, and regard her as one of the most perfect ladies I have ever met."

"Ah!"

"I certainly do," and arising he continued, "excuse me, Miss Blanche, I must go see Mrs. Moorleigh."

On entering her room he found his housekeeper quite sick. She was advanced in years and had been accustomed to these spells of sick headache for a long time, though she had cause to hope she would be cured of them, as she had

now escaped for a longer period than usual. "How long have you been sick, Mrs. Moorleigh?" he questioned.

"Since early this morning."

"Did mother know of your illness before she left?"

"I told her I had a headache, but I was not suffering so much when she left."

"I was somewhat complaining myself this morning, but feel all right now. I have a remedy in my room that will help you; shall I go for it, Mrs. Moorleigh?"

"Anything you think will relieve me, I am willing to take."

He went to his room and soon came back with a blue vial of what he called sick headache tablets, gave her one to swallow, and seating himself by the window, waited the effect. In an hour he repeated the dose and his patient soon slept peacefully. When she awoke she said the pain in her head was gone.

"You are a good doctor, Mr. Ethan; wish you had come in to see me sooner, for I fear this spell has caused me to fail to finish the purse I am knitting to present my brother for his birthday present; nevertheless am very glad to be relieved of that terrible misery in my head, and thank you for its disappearance."

"You needn't mind to thank me; I am glad you are better, and would have been to see about you sooner but didn't know that you was sick until noon."

"Wish I was able to be up to-day," said she, "guess you are very lonely here in this big house, with no company except the servants."

"No, I rather enjoy being alone occasionally, yet I'm not alone to-day, since one of the ladies remained at home with me."

"Which one?"

"Miss Clifton."

"Do you mean to say that Miss Blanche is here and the other ladies absent?"

"She is certainly in the house, and no doubt thinks I should exert myself to entertain her, yet to be plain, Mrs. Moorleigh, I just can't bore myself with her all day; I was in hopes she too would take herself off to the city."

Mrs. Moorleigh had been in his employ for quite a number of years; she was a sensible old lady, whose kind sympathy had ever been a source of great consolation to him, therefore he entrusted her with about as much confidence as he ever gave anyone, consequently expressed his dislike for the heiress to her in full.

"I dislike to treat anyone with disrespect,

especially in my own house, yet it worries me beyond measure to be bored with her."

"Well, Mr. Ethan, I'd just go on and attend to my own affairs; never mind what she thinks; as for my part I don't know where her eyes can be, that she don't see how distasteful she is to you; I could see it the first time she came here on a visit; and between you and me, I don't understand how anyone could admire her; I can't see what your mother finds attractive about her. That they are working to captivate you is very discernable, but I'm glad you are wise enough to read that woman; take my advice, Mr. Ethan, and steer your ship clear of her."

"You are quite right, Mrs. Moorleigh, I don't consider her a worthy lady by any means, and if your supposition be true that she is trying to captivate me, the attempt is fruitless, I'll assure you."

During this time the lady in question sat in the parlor idly turning the leaves of a book, anxiously expecting the master of the house to make his appearance, until she at last decided that he did not mean to come and went to her room, wrote a letter which she secretly mailed on the following evening, and when Mrs. Lewis came back, met and asked if she was not worn out with the day's trip.

"I'm right tired," said her friend, kissing her upon the cheek and handing her a package of knick-knacks.

"And how have you and Ethan spent the time, pleasantly I trust?"

"Yes, we got along very well; did you get Margoleen's habit?"

"Oh yes, and was more fortunate than I expected; found a beautiful one, ready made, that fits to perfection; 'tis blue in color, with cap to correspond; you must see it. Margoleen, bring the valise and show your habit to Miss Blanche."

"It is quite pretty," said the heiress, as our heroine held up the costume for her inspection.

CHAPTER XX.

So enthusiastic was Mrs. Lewis over Margoleen's new habit, that the next morning found her up and out in time to see them off for another horse-back ride, and as she watched her son hand the beautiful figure to her saddle, she almost wished that she was, in reality, her daughter.

"But no, I could never consent to my son marrying a woman who is beneath him in rank. I know nothing about this girl only that she is a most beautiful creature, yet is, perhaps, of low

birth; no, dear Blanche, I shall not give up my hope of you," she soliloquized, as she stood and watched them ride from her sight.

From this time on they continued to ride every morning when the weather would permit, until our heroine could have been classed among the best lady riders of the community, and that she enjoyed these rides could not be disputed; yes, she grew to look forward to them as the happiest moments of her life, and he, what shall we say of him? Associating with this pure, young creature, the curtain of his memory rolls back and reveals his past; again his youthful strength is renewed, yet he realizes it to be the life-long love of matured manhood, instead of the fierce passion of a boy, and believing his affection to be sadly misplaced, the poem of Henry Kirk White inevitably comes to his mind—

"Is it a weakness thus to dwell
On passions that I dare not tell?
Such weakness I would ever prove;
'Tis painful but 'tis sweet to love."

Two months had gone by since the family had been united, and during this short period a link that was never to be broken, was formed in their lives. His thoughtful care of her, together with the knowledge of his superior wisdom and most worthy character, caused what might be

termed her soul's awakening. She now loved him with her whole heart, whilst he, bathed in the influence of her sweet disposition, felt that he must soon leave ere she realized how deeply he loved her. "But a little while longer must I trust myself near her," he mused each day, "I would not cloud her pure, sweet life with the knowledge of my love, so hopelessly vain. I must return to my rambles, but I shall first endeavor to surround her with friends and acquaintances, that she may be happier here."

"Yes, we must give an entertainment of some kind and acquaint her with the young folks of the community. I would prefer her making her debut in our own home, as there are generally so many fops to encounter in cities," he had remarked to his mother one day, "and will leave it to your decision as to what kind of an entertainment we give."

"Blanche and I have concluded that a lawn party would be the most appropriate. There has been nothing of this kind in the neighborhood, and you know I dislike to be common; besides, our grounds are so nice for such occasions," said she.

"Very well, set your time, make out your order for refreshments, etcetera, and all things shall be as you desire."

"Well, let me think; this is Monday evening: to-morrow week will be the time. Engage a band of music and have plenty of lights; as for refreshments, you and Mrs. Moorleigh can attend to that, I will have enough to think about without bothering about this."

Miss Clifton and her hostess set to work in earnest, and were all absorbed in preparation for their toilettes, yet Margoleen, never having been present on such an occasion, felt but little interest; however, she did as Mrs. Lewis directed in regard to braiding her hair on the evening before.

"Blanche," said Mrs. Lewis, on the day following her son's conversation in which a lawn party was agreed upon, "have you made out a list of those you wish to invite to our party? Here is mine," she continued, holding up a long list of names.

"I have only a few names down," was the reply.

"Well, give them to me, and Ethan will have the invitations printed; I want everything in style, you know. Here, son!" she called as Ethan started out to ride down to the city. "And where is your list, Margie?" he asked, smiling.

"I don't know anyone; therefore, am not able to get up a list."

"You shall not have that to say when the party is over, for I shall see that you have an introduction all around."

The week soon went by bringing the evening for the eventful occasion. All things were now in readiness, the grounds and mansion illuminated, and the crowd assembled, when Mr. Lewis went in search of his ward.

"There she is," said Mrs. Moorleigh, pointing to the demure little figure in the back sitting room, seated in the shade of the chandelier, her creamy lace dress, besprinkled with imitation dewdrops, her long braided hair looped back from her peach glowing face, with ornaments of pearl. Mrs. Lewis' taste had been considered in all save her dress being cut low in the neck and short sleeves, as was the style of Miss Clifton's in these particulars, but adhered to her own preference for one made high in the neck and long sleeves.

"Come, Margie, let me conduct you to our guests and introduce you."

She arose and took his proffered arm, while a slight shudder shook her frame.

"Hello! my little girl, you are not scared, are you?"

"I feel a little nervous," she answered, with trembling voice.

"Let me bring you a drink of water; now let us take a turn across the room and back, perhaps this will serve to compose you."

Together they walked up and down the floor several times, then stopping before a large mirror, he said in a casual manner, "January and May don't harmonize; the frost of the one would blight the other."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean that I was once young and hopeful, like you," he evasively replied.

"I am sure you don't look old, Mr. Lewis.

"Age has begun to tell on me. Shall we go? Do you now feel that you can meet the crowd?"

"I am much stronger, let us go."

He proudly led her amid the throng and introduced her, while all eyes gleamed with admiration. Finding her a seat he left her in conversation with several young ladies and went in search of some fans. On his way he met Miss Clifton coming through the hall, leaning upon the arm of a strikingly handsome young man, whom he had never before seen, and she accosted him in the following manner, "Mr. Lewis, I will make you acquainted with my nephew, Mr. Benton Percy; he has just arrived; and I am taking the liberty of seeing him to the parlors."

"Welcome, Mr. Percy; I am happy to meet you. Take him along, Miss Blanche, I'll be back, presently. Make yourself at home, Mr. Percy."

"Thank you," and bowing gracefully, he (Percy) walked on, talking to his companion in a low tone. "I was somewhat puzzled over your letter," he was saying to her, "yet understood that you wished me to be certain to be here to-night."

"Yes, I am glad you are here, as I have a part for you to play that will be to our interest; *greatly so*, I'll assure you."

"You excite my curiosity; tell me your meaning?"

No, I cannot do that now, neither could I explain by letter; I would fear to communicate my secret only in person. My scheme is a deep one, and the first young lady to whom I introduce you to-night, is its object. Remember your best powers of fascination are required here, and when the party is over be sure to call on me in my own private room; no one will dispute your right as my nephew, and there I shall give you a full explanation; don't forget all I have told you."

"I shall not."

Together they entered the parlor, which glowed

in dazzling splendor, and leading him to where Margoleen sat, gaily chatting to some young girls, introduced him to her as Miss Melbroke. She acknowledged the introduction with a bow, and asked them to be seated.

He did so and began a conversation, while the other girls whispered to each other that he was the handsomest young man in the house. Nor did they mistake when they pronounced him so, for he was truly what the average girl would rave over, fully six feet in height, well proportioned, had a clear, rosy complexion, black curly hair, large black eyes, delicate white hands, a beautiful foot, and was apparently about twenty-four or five years of age. His dress was faultlessly neat; his diamond ring and shirt studs shed their rays promiscuously over the room.

Mr. Lewis came back to find his ward apparently absorbed in this handsome young stranger, and Miss Clifton, having refused the only vacant seat near them, stood leaning upon the back of her nephew's chair.

"Have fans, ladies, said their host, proffering a handful of palms, "and I suggest that we go out upon the lawn, as it will perhaps be more pleasant outdoors."

He had turned to lead the way, when Miss Clifton said in a tone scarcely audible to any in

the room save him, who was near her elbow, "I must find Mrs. Lewis or I shall be left."

"Come with me, Miss Blanche," said the one for whom this speech was intended, "and I will escort you to the lawn."

On their way out he came upon his mother, and offering to her his other arm, conducted both ladies to a rustic bench, amid several clustering groups of people who had gone ahead of them. He left them here, where together, for a long time, they interested themselves watching the young people promenade up and down the lovely walk, until at length, hanging upon the arm of Benton Percy, Margoleen made her appearance. Mrs. Lewis, now observing him for the first time, inquired who he was.

"That gentleman with Margoleen is my nephew, Mr. Benton Percy," replied her companion, "don't you think them a handsome pair?"

"By far the handsomest on the grounds; but why have you not told me of him before?"

"I preferred to wait and let you judge whether or not he be handsome."

"He certainly is," and Mrs. Lewis' gaze followed him until they were out of sight, while her companion poured into her credulous ear a history of his most estimable character.

"He is all that an aunt should be proud of," she went on, "his disposition is most loveable, and should I die without children, he inherits my entire estate."

"Ah!"

"Yes, I have made my will to this effect."

Mrs. Lewis now grew more interested, and when her son returned, called his attention to the handsome couple as they again came up the walk, stepping time to the sweet strains of music.

"Yes, I have been noticing them," said he, as the heiress keenly scrutinized his countenance.

CHAPTER XXI.

Benton Percy, to his displeasure, had been removed from Margoleen's side, and was now endeavoring to collect his disconcerted faculties sufficient to entertain a pretty country lass, who fluently questioned him in regard to his home, business, stay in Kentucky, etc. His eyes and eyes and attention was so often turned to Margoleen, and his replies so often given in monosyllables, that his companion must have detected his lack of interest, and grown weary of his society. Several hours of the evening had been most pleasantly spent, when supper was announced, and Mr. Lewis, in company with a young man,

whom he had previously introduced to Margoleen, came to her and said, "My friend, Mr. Montgomery, solicits the pleasure of accompanying Miss Melbroke to supper.

"Certainly," she replied, as she arose and accepted his proffered arm. Together they proceeded to the table, much to the discomfiture of the heiress and her nephew. However, they were not to be discouraged by the seeming preference for Mr. Montgomery.

"That man shall be no stumbling-block to my desire; I can see that he is already charmed with her, yet I am confident she acknowledges Benton to be the handsomest man of the two, and I am sure he has the art of ensnaring all upon whom he sees fit to smile," soliloquized Miss Clifton, as she fell into ranks and went out to the most sumptuous repast.

We will here describe Waller Montgomery as being a young man of sterling worth; integrity was stamped upon his brow, his disposition was bright and cheerful, and his business qualities most admirable. He was of medium size, fair complexion, and dressed neatly, yet not dudish. He was a resident of their neighboring city, Cashier of its First National Bank, quite wealthy, and aside from his laudible character, a warm friend of Ethan Lewis; hence, expressed his

admiration of his ward, and asked his permission to visit her with the view to matrimony. It was indeed bitter for Ethan to surrender the privilege of seeking her hand to another, when he himself loved her so dearly, yet he did so, believing there was no hope for himself, and that he was granting the request of a pure, good man, whom any woman might be proud to call husband. "I cannot expect her to remain single always, and if I must give her up, why not to Waller?" he mused.

The time had now expired for the guests to remain longer, and it was generally expressed as being the most enjoyable event of the season. Good-byes had been exchanged, and Margoleen, though somewhat fatigued, was in a perfect state of bliss at the idea of having made the acquaintance of the neighbor girls, and formed a compact to be sociable enough to them. "I don't care if I never go to spend my time in cities, I am as happy here as I could wish to be," she soliloquized, as her nimble fingers unlossed her evening dress, shook out her heavy coils of hair, and enrobed herself for sleep. The company had all gone except Benton Percy, who, upon the plea of relationship, had been invited by Mrs. Lewis to remain for a time with his aunt.

"Thank you," was the reply to the invitation,

"I shall be stopping for a time in your city, as business requires my presence there, but as I have not seen my aunt for some time before to-night, will accept your kind hospitality and remain over at least for the night. I would like, if it will not disturb you, to go to her room awhile before I retire?"

"Certainly, Mr. Percy, you need not fear that you will disturb anyone. Phil," she called, "show Mr. Percy first to the room that he is to occupy, then to his aunt's, Miss Clifton's room. You can then find your way when it suits you to retire, Mr. Percy."

"Thank you," and again he bowed and gave her one of his most fascinating smiles.

"Come in," said his aunt, as Phil tapped gently at her door. He dismissed his attendant, entered, and took her proffered seat. She went to the door, strained her ear for a second, and gently turned the key in the lock; then drawing her chair close to him, began the following conversation:

"Well, Benton, how do you like Miss Melbroke?"

"Stavingly," was his rough answer, quite different from the refined language he had used in the presence of the lady now in question. "Yes, I'm dead gone on her! What is it you

wish me closeted here with you for, Aunt Blanche? You had best let me go on to bed and dream sweet dreams of Margoleen Melbroke.''

''Hush! talk low; someone might poke their ear to the keyhole.''

''Well, I'm quiet now, and all attention; what is your scheme? To kill Margoleen and marry her guardian yourself? Ah-ha, Auntie! How many eyes would you suppose me to have?''

''If you will ever be quiet, I'll proceed to tell you for what purpose I wrote, summoning you here.''

''All right; go on.''

''Well, to begin with, you know, Benton, that my business is in quite a shaky condition. The Pine Grove mansion and its belongings are now not only heavily mortgaged but a terrible lawsuit is pending as to my rightful inheritance. That it is quite necessary for us to contrive some way to stand off the difficulties, you are certainly aware.''

''Yes, indeed; and we will have to shuffle like the mischief to be ready to fight them,'' was the reply.

''You are quite right, and now to the point. I have studied out a plan that will secure us, even should Pine Grove be swept away, and it

is this: You go to work, captivate Margoleen, and marry her at the earliest period you can get her to consent. She is the ward of Ethan Lewis, who is not only the master of Cuthbert, but also a man of other great wealth. He loves his ward to an extent that he will not only settle a good estate upon her when she marries, but, having good reason to believe he will never marry himself, I know he will make her his sole heir; I believe he has just this love for and confidence in her. The man who calls her wife will be most fortunate, indeed. In other words, Benton, I could then through your stratagem, redeem the Pine Grove property, which is to be yours at my death, remember, besides, I tell you Ethan Lewis will, at once, make the husband of his pet a rich man. Do you understand me?''

''Indeed, I do, and shall go to work at once. How do my burnsides look, Auntie? Am I as good looking as I used to be?'' said he, arising and going to the mirror. ''By Jove! Margoleen is a fortune, herself; hasn't she tempting lips?''

''Yes, but you will have to be very refined to suit her taste; you should not attempt to kiss her before marriage.''

''Is she so prudish as this?''

"She certainly is; so be on your guard, by all means."

"All right, auntie, I'll do as you say, but where shall I stay during our courtship? Down at the nearest city?"

"Of course; you can pretend to be there on business for awhile, and you should waste no time in wooing her. Go to your room now, and be sure to see her again before you leave."

"Very well," and he was soon in bed, sleeping soundly.

Having kept such late hours the previous night, the entire household slept late the next morning, and the sun was away up in the sky when they met at the breakfast table. The meal being over, Mr. Percy requested Miss Melbroke's presence in the parlor. Accordingly, she dressed herself in a pale blue lawn and made her appearance. For an hour or more they remained in pleasant conversation, until at length he started, after receiving her consent to call again the next day.

"I shall be in your city, sometimes," said he, "and would be most happy to meet you often."

"Call again," she answered, as he tipped his hat in adieu and left the house. "He is quite handsome," thought she, "yet there is some-

thing wanting in his face and manner,'' and for a moment he was forgotten.

A few evenings after this, she was in the library seated with her back to the door, poring over Longfellow's poems, when her guardian walked into the room, and without speaking, stood looking at her fair young face.

''Be seated, Mr. Lewis,'' she said, without raising her eyes from the book.

''How did you know it was I, Margoleen?''

''I can always tell when you are behind or near me,'' was her answer, that caused his heart to thrill with faint hope, to be soon trampled by the conviction that to think of her loving a man as old as himself would be doing her an injustice, and with a mighty effort he calmed himself sufficiently to say, as he took a seat near her, ''Margoleen, I have come here to talk to you upon a subject that seems to be my sacred duty.''

''What is it, sir?'' she inquired, with interest.

''You are now a grown young lady, and according to the natural course of life, will some day think about marrying.'' A blush dyed her cheek, and her heart beat in breathless suspense, whilst he paused abruptly, and heaved a deep sigh. ''What is he going to say to me? Has he suspected my affection for him?'' were

her thoughts, when he began again, "yes, Margie, you will some day think about marrying, and what I would tell you is this: My friend, Mr. Waller Montgomery, has asked my permission to visit you with a view to matrimony."

"Is it that you want me to marry, and select Mr. Montgomery as my husband?" she asked, in a piqued tone.

"No, no, Margoleen; I would not have you marry anyone only through your own choice, but as I promised my friend that he could visit you, I think it but just that I should speak to you in his behalf. Remember that I would have you use your own pleasure as regards your actions towards him in connection with yourself. He is my friend and I can conscientiously recommend him as being a man of exemplary habits; noble, generous, industrious, possessed of all that is calculated to make a woman happy."

"I am already happy, Mr. Lewis."

"True, Margoleen, but you may not always be so, and should you ever be interested in him, you may understand that he is worthy. Don't think I want my little girl to be in any hurry whatever to marry, bide your own time, and as long as you can be content to remain single, I shall not urge you otherwise."

"Then you won't be mad if I don't choose Mr. Montgomery?" she laughingly said.

"No, no, but you will tell me ere long that you are dead in love with him."

CHAPTER XXII.

From this time on, both Montgomery and Percy visited Margoleen regularly, while a more responsive heart silently awaited the consequences. Ethan's flattering description had naturally caused her to respect his friend; indeed, she learned from association that he was more than an ordinary gentleman, so strictly refined in sentiment as to win the admiration of all who knew him. She enjoyed his society very much, and treated him with marked deference, yet, a deeper feeling than friendship, for one she knew to be a favorite of her benefactor, had never pierced her heart, 'though Ethan sometimes imagined his prophesy nearing consummation, and endeavored to console himself with the thought that it would be his dear friend who would occupy the place in her affections that he so vainly desired.

He had about determined to again leave home for a time, when one day, during one of his friend's visits to his ward, he was seated upon

the front balcony reading, and heard through the large bay window that opened from the parlor, (wherein he sat) Waller ask Margoleen to play an old Scottish air, whose title I disremember. Accordingly she seated herself at the piano, and never before did he hear her play with such skill, or sing with such effect. Her whole soul seemed thrown pathetically into this Scotch lament, so peculiarly adapted to his own sad life, that he (Ethan) almost dared to lay the true state of his feelings before her, and receive from her lips his denunciation. When the song was ended, without the intention of eaves-dropping, he heard the calm, modulated voice of his friend say, "Miss Margoleen, you cannot be blind to the fact that my attention to you means more than mere friendship." Ethan tarried not to hear more, but took himself off at once, feeling that the inevitable crisis had come at last. We will not relate the ensuing conversation between them, suffice it to say that when Waller Montgomery left her presence, some two hours later, his face, though still calm, wore a disappointed look, and Ethan, without waiting to learn the result of this occasion, which he feels confident has ended in his friend's favor, fearing to subject himself to the mean tiger, jealousy, left home. Meantime Benton Percy never lost an oppor-

tunity possible for him to be in her company, nor did he fail to exert every power imaginable to ingratiate himself; he could laugh, cry, sigh, do anything to perfection that was calculated to move her in his favor, and she had really been decoyed into enjoying his company to an extent that when he failed to call (which he occasionally did on purpose that he might note her interest) she missed his seemingly happy flow of spirits which had enlivened the hours since Ethan had gone and Waller Montgomery decreased his visits; and when he (Percy) thought his way paved sufficiently that she would accept his hand in marriage, proposed.

"I love you more than all the world," he said to her, "and will do all in my power to make you happy, yea, surround you with every eomfort, tell me, Margoleen, that you love me, and will consent to be my wife."

Imagine his consternation when calmly she replied, "Mr. Percy, while I thank you for paying me what I consider the greatest compliment that a gentleman can bestow upon a lady (his name, heart, and protection), yet I truly regret it, as I cannot be your wife."

"And why not?" he asked.

"Because I do not love you."

"Could you not in time learn to love me; I

would wait patiently for you, Margoleen; is there no hope for me?''

''No sir, I think not.''

''Is there anyone else whom you do love?''

''You have no right to ask this question.''

''I will not give you up, but shall pray fervently that the time will come when you will say, 'Benton, I love you,''' and the earnest look upon his face plead for him wonderfully. ''You will not forbid my society, will you, Margoleen? The thought of this would kill me,'' and he wiped a tear from his eye with his handkerchief.

''I am perfectly willing to receive your visits in friendship, but as I would not mislead you in regard to my appreciation, I warn you to place your affections upon some one else who could reciprocate your love.''

The clock in the hall chimed ten when he arose and said, ''Your bed time, I shall go, but must see you again soon. I want you to remember that to-night you have stabbed as true a heart as ever beat; meantime I shall pray that you pull the dagger from my breast and allow the wound to heal; good-night,'' and he was gone.

Margoleen now alone, felt a little afraid to go upstairs. ''I will go for Tricksy,'' she decided, and as she neared the kitchen door, distinctly

heard her maid, who at this time was also entertaining company, say, "I spec it is ten o'clock, Jim, de time for all decent folks to be in bed, so I'se bound to say good-night."

"I don't know what de clock say, but de hands ob my heart pints zackly toge you, Miss Tricksy, I'se shoo," said he.

Margoleen could scarce refrain from laughing outright, as she called, "Come, Tricksy, it is bed-time," and Jim at once left the kitchen.

"Miss Margoleen, would yer mind to stand here in the kitchen door until I go and lock the meat house door?" said Tricksy. "Aunt Silvie told me to be sure to lock it, and hang the key in the kitchen, before I went to bed."

"I will go with you," said she, a little afraid to be left, as she was unaccustomed to being alone, and somehow felt a little more nervous to-night than usual; so together they went across the yard, and as they returned to the house, saw a man step from the West balcony and flee to the shadow of the lilac bushes.

"O! Tricksy; look, did you not see a man run from the porch?"

"Yes'um, less run."

With hearts beating with fright, they ran into the house, and slamming the door behind them, bolted upstairs, to be accosted by Miss Clifton,

who met them at the head of the steps and asked, "What upon earth do you all mean by running upstairs in this boisterous manner, scaring people to death?"

"Oh! Miss Blanche, we saw a man run from the West balcony," said Margoleen in her excitement.

"O pshaw! you have made all this ado about nothing; I saw Mr. Lewis' old bird dog Don a few moments since leap over the banister of the balcony. I saw him from my window, threw a bowl of water on him while he slept, causing him to get away in a hurry. You mistook him for a man, ha! ha! your imagination is at fault this time. I could laugh at you good, only that you gave me such a scare. I shall go back to bed now, and trust you will not disturb me again with your absurd fancies."

Margoleen was soon in bed wondering how she could have been so much mistaken, yet she believed Miss Clifton's statement to be true, since she remembered to have been exceedingly nervous all that evening.

"I surely am not very well," she had said to Tricksy, who was revolving in her mind the thought of how Miss Clifton arranged to dress so quickly if she had already retired.

Yet their story was true, they had indeed seen

a man and he was no other than Benton Percy, who, after taking leave of Margoleen, had as often before, stole or was attempting to steal, to his aunt's room, by way of this side entrance, in order to post her in regard to his lack of success with Margoleen, nor was he thwarted in this to-night, for after waiting until she knew the house was again quiet, his aunt waved from her window a signal that he understood meant for him to again attempt to enter, and it was not long until he was securely by the side of her, who was so much interested, relating her defeat.

"Never mind, Benton," she said, after lowering her eyes for a few moments in reflection, "I think I have a plan that will bring her into measures."

"What now, auntie? I'm so much infatuated that I am ready for any emergency; let me hear your plan at once."

"Well, you understand that Margoleen believes her father to have been lost at sea?"

"Just so."

"Benton, now listen (drawing her chair a little closer to him). You must write her an anonymous letter, saying that her father still lives, though for reasons which he will explain later, wishes his existence kept a profound secret, and desiring to see his child who was torn

from his bosom in infancy, wishes her to have confidence enough in him to meet him at twilight in the old mill-house at the back of the orchard. Ask her to come alone, as you, her father, want to confide in her, his dear child, the secret of his persecuted life. Get you a grey wig, false beard to match, a regular vagabond's attire, and be certain to perfume yourself well with alcohol. She will come expecting to be received by a loving father, and will be so humbled by the thought of being the child of a vagabond, that you will be liable to get her under control; then begin at once to try to persuade her to promise to marry Benton Percy, you understand. Only stratagem of this kind will serve your purpose. She will admonish you to be a Christian; promise her that you will reform if she will marry the man of your choice. Think up some great story to tell her of his benevolence to you—that he saved your life, or something of the kind. She may at first refuse to accede, but continue to follow her up, and urge your request. We know that she has refused to marry Waller Montgomery, who is considered the best catch for a young girl around here, and she certainly would have accepted him, but ah! I know the reason she refused him, she loves her guardian, and he almost old enough

to be her father! Yes, follow her up, Benton, dog her steps, slip to her room occasionally, claiming that it is a father's right, worry her until she finally surrenders, which I'm sure she will eventually do, and the victory will be ours."

"I'm your man, auntie; you dear old duck, to engineer for me."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Two days later our heroine, alone in her room, sat by the open window, watching the lowering clouds that now threatened rain, while her hand tightly clasped a letter whose contents she now pondered. Many had been the times, since her guardian left, that she sighed, yea, longed for his society, yet to-day did she more particularly feel the need of his wonted sympathy, so peculiarly her own right, that when the least cloud darkened her sky, her thoughts turned to him, as the needle to the pole. "But even were he here," the unhappy thought ran through her mind, "I am not at liberty to tell him my trouble. This, like the other important secret of my life, must be locked from him; what to do I do not know, the letter tells me that my father still lives, yet desires his existence kept secret. 'Tis strange he has never before found me out, or at

least made his existence known to me. I do wonder what compels him to live in obscurity; it seems that he could have been more explicit in his letter, at any rate I'm a little doubtful in regard to his being my father, and don't think I could have the courage to meet him at the old mill-house alone. I'll wait until something more definite comes to light."

And so endeavoring to put the subject from her mind, she went down to the piano and suggested to play for the other ladies of the house a new song they had never heard.

"I don't like the song very much," said Mrs. Lewis, when she had finished playing; "you don't seem to know it, I never heard you play so out of tune before."

"I only took it up a little while yesterday and played it so well then I thought I could do it again to-day. I shall not attempt to play again for anyone until I have practiced it more; leaving the room she continued, "I believe I will go to the orchard and get a basket of apples."

"Why Margoleen, Tricksy or Phil can go for the apples," said Mrs. Lewis.

"I prefer to go myself, as I want the walk anyway," said she, as the piercing eye of her enemy (Miss Clifton) notes her restlessless, and well understood its cause.

"You should not start out for a walk at this hour of the day; see, it is only three o'clock; wait until later, when the sun gets lower it will be cooler, and I, perhaps, will go with you."

So her inclination to go just now to the orchard and determine the exact situation of the mill-house was thwarted, as in consideration of her benefactor, she was, in most things, obedient to his mother, hence her walk was postponed until later in the evening, when the other ladies would accompany her. She would not admit, even to herself, that she had any thought of granting her alleged father's request, who said in his letter of this morning's date, "Meet me alone, at the old mill-house in the orchard, at twilight to-morrow evening; I am so anxious to see my child who was torn from me in infancy. Dear Margoleen, come to your father who has been persecuted most cruelly; don't be afraid to come, and I will make plain what now seems mysterious to you."

"I shall not go," she repeated in his mind, and yet these words haunted her to such an extent that she was both restless and miserable. At length Mrs. Lewis, and also Miss Clifton, expressed themselves ready to walk with her, and as she proceeded thither Margoleen rejoiced that it was this, instead of the following evening,

they were to accompany her. She would not acknowledge that she would go to the mill-house on the appointed evening, yet a mysterious influence was moving her in this direction.

"Let us go to the back of the orchard," suggested she, as they stopped beneath the shade of a large tree, which Mrs. Lewis named a Summer Pearmain, and continued, "there are not many good apples over there, only the mill-house stands amidst a dense clump of trees that bear but little fruit."

"Well, we won't go over there," said Miss Clifton, watching the effect of her words upon Margoleen's face.

"Suppose we do go," urged our heroine, "I would like to see the old mill-house."

"There is but little to see now, since the machinery was removed several years ago, leaving the old house in a state of dilapidation. Ethan said he would not have it torn down, as it would serve as shelter for his sheep and hogs. However, as 'tis pleasant, we will walk over there. Do you feel like going, Blanche?"

"Oh, yes, I guess I can walk as far as you can."

So they went, and unconscious of her every act being noted, Margoleen walked about and examined the whole house. "It is a delolate

place,'' thought she, ''and I don't think I could come here alone, though it were to meet my own father. He is unknown to me, and I tremble at the thought of meeting a stranger here alone.''

When she went to bed that night, it was not to sleep, for her mind was so disturbed at the idea of her father being alive, and requesting her to meet him clandestinely; the attempt was vain. The entire night was spent with her eyes wide open, and the next morning she arose in such feverish excitement that the heiress greatly feared Mrs. Lewis would detect her unusual restlessness, and perhaps in some way spoil her plan for this evening, hence she herself found it quite difficult to resume her usual calm throughout the day, yet, without the observation of others, managed to keep her hawkish eye upon its unsuspecting prey, until at last the shades of evening grew long, the clock struck six, and she discovered Margoleen with a feigned excuse, lift her sun hat from the rack, and humming an air that was anything but congenial to her feelings, go skipping out of the house without asking anyone to accompany her, the eyes of her enemy discovered that after walking about the yard and examining the rose-buds for a time, she stole through the gate that opened into the orchard

and was soon hid from view by the spreading fruit trees.

"She has surely gone," said the heiress to herself, "thank goodness for that! How I do wish I could follow and see her meet him; but no, that would not do; I might be seen and this would ruin all; I must wait and trust to Benton's shrewdness, 'tis all that I can do." So she set to work to keep her hostess' mind well occupied with a history of her previous days.

"You have had a great deal of attention, Blanche, it is a great wonder that you have never married," said Mrs. Lewis.

"Yes, my admirers have been so numerous as to compel me to flee to some secluded spot to have a little quiet. Often have I left home on this account. You have no idea of the number of hands—I will not say hearts, since it is seldom a man courts an heiress for anything but her property—I have refused, but, of course, dear Mrs. Lewis, you will keep what I say on this subject strictly confidential; I can say so much to you as we have long been friends, and I know you will not deem me egotistical. It is not myself, understand, that they so much desire, but my wealth, and I would marry a man who loves me only for my humble self."

"You remind me of Ethan in your view of

matrimony, he will never marry for money; no, indeed."

While Mrs. Lewis is so well entertained that she does not notice Margoleen's absence, we will go on after her, who, with loud beating heart and trembling limbs, is making her way to the old mill-house, where she has all the time tried to persuade herself she would not go on this appointed evening. Vainly she had endeavored to put the subject from her mind, yet the words, "don't be afraid to come; I am longing to once more see my child, who was torn from me in infancy," rang in her ears. "I do not know my father, yet remember that my mother apparently loved his memory more than all else. I must go," she finally decided. I *must* see my father," and on she sped, until coming to a door of the old mill-house, she stopped to gather courage, when she heard a sepulchral voice say, "come in, my child; 'tis yet too light for me to risk meeting you at the door."

With resolute tread she stepped in a few yards, when the most horrid looking old man she had ever seen, ran and enfolded her trembling form in an embrace, while the fumes of alcohol almost suffocated her. He kissed her twice upon the cheek, ere she had the presence

of mind to try and defend herself, then with unnatural strength she eluded his grasp and was about to scream for help, when he said, "don't scream, my dear child; don't call the persecutors upon your poor father, who has already had trouble enough to kill him. You are indeed my daughter, the child of poor Agnes. Oh how I once loved your mother, and thought that she loved me, even though I drank liquor."

"And did you love 'King Alcohol' more than my sainted mother?" she looked at him, now defiantly, and asked.

"No, no, Margoleen, hear me through, and you surely cannot withhold your sympathy at least."

"Go on," she demanded.

"Well, your mother and I lived happily together until another fellow learned to love her fair face. Believing her to return his attentions I grew jealous, and stabbed him, with a dagger, in his breast, which ended his life. Your mother seemed much affected, pleading her innocence, but I don't know yet but what she was at fault."

"No, sir, I cannot believe my mother guilty of wrong; you are certainly mistaken."

"Well, I guess this has been determined in the other world. Anyway I was arrested, tried

before the court, and sentenced to be hung for murder.''

''Then why did my mother teach me that my father was lost at sea?''

''Lost at sea,'' he repeated, ''ha! ha! that is just like her; she ever had a plaster ready for difficulties; she did not want her child to believe, as she did, that it's father was hung; but, thank God, in this she was mistaken, and that I still live to stand before my child to plead for the happiness of him who rescued me from the gallows. He loves my child, and will you not repay him for saving you from the shame of being a hanged man's child, by giving him your hand in marriage? He slipped me out of prison, gave me money to flee, else I would have been hung, and you wearing the disgrace of your father's crime. Since then I have assumed the name of Dudly Hugo, and 'tis only whiskey that keeps me from the mad-house. Will you marry my friend, Margoleen; I repeat, will you marry him?''

CHAPTER XXIV.

''Who is he?'' she asked.

''Benton Percy, the only friend I have on earth.''

"And would you have your child marry a man whom she does not love?"

"Pshaw! that's all stuff; if he is kind to you, which I know he will be, as he loves your dearly, you will soon learn to love him, for he has the money to treat you like a queen."

"I cannot marry Mr. Percy, I do not love him, and if you were in reality my father I don't think you would ask me to do so."

"Stop, Margoleen, I know whom you love; it is no other than the man you call guardian; let me say to you, he does not love you, and even even if he did, before he should stand in my friend's way I would come out publicly and claim my right as your parent. That lovely spot," he continued, moving his hand toward the mansion, "should no longer be your home; I would take you to my hut and there introduce you to the poverty designed for those of your rank. Again I ask, will you marry Benton Percy?"

"I will not."

She now trembled for fear of violence, so angry he looked from his red, bloated face, yet he quelled his rage and answered, "My child, I do love you, and will give you time to consider my request. Go back to the house now, you might be missed; think the matter over, I don't want

to be hard on you, and one week from this evening I shall expect you here again to give me your decision, but remember, Margoleen, you must not refuse my request, it would not only prove detrimental to you, but cause me to plunge deeper into sin."

"Before I go, I will make a request of you," said she; "whether you be my father or not, I beg of you to reform your life and live a Christian."

"My child," said he, as tears came to his eyes, an art he had in calling them forth when he deemed it necessary, "if you will give me my friend for a son-in-law, I will forever afterwards refrain from drink, lead a new life, and try to make you proud of me." His tears and this speech affected her more than anything had previously done, yet she did not consent to marry his friend. He noted this and said, as she started to leave him: "Remember to come here again, this evening one week, else I will go to the mansion to see my child, and this, perhaps, would lead to my discovery, and cause me yet to be swung," and he sobbed and cried aloud.

"I'll come back," said she, "but wish you would allow me to write and tell Mr. Lewis your troubles. I believe he could find some

way to release you, provided you reform your life.''

''No, no,'' he answered almost savagely, ''you shall tell no one, if you do I'll kill myself. Benton Percy is the only man who can save me. Marry him and your father is restored.''

The bell for supper was ringing when she came back into the yard, and running upstairs she hurriedly washed her tear-stained face and went into the dining-room, where Mrs. Lewis and the heiress, who had preceded her, were in most flattering terms speaking of the now all important Mr. Percy.

''Benton is surely the best hearted boy on earth,'' said his aunt, ''I really get vexed with him at times for persisting in answering all the old widow's calls for help, whether he knows them to be really in need or not.''

''I admire your nephew very much,'' replied her hostess, ''am convinced that he has a kind heart; I saw him down at the city, a few days since, give an old beggar man not only a five dollar bill, but also take him into a store and buy him a new coat. The old fellow smiled and thanked him repeatedly, and your nephew turned to me and said, ' 'Tis our duty to help the poor, Mrs. Lewis, and I'm sure we are happier to do so.' His action inspired me to follow his exam-

ple, and I ran after the old man and gave him a dollar myself."

"Yes, that is just like him, to give a handful at once. I've no doubt that he has given thousands of dollars to the poor."

Margoleen heard all this, but ate her supper in silence, or rather sipped her coffee. Her mind was so fraught with trouble she could not eat, but pushed aside the delicious batter-cakes, and upon the plea of headache went early to her room. However, she did not go to bed until late, but after extinguishing her light, sat down by the open window, and for hours ruminated upon the event of the evening.

"Is it possible that I am the offspring of this —I will say parent—as I cannot believe my mother other than purity. She must have mistaken a mean man for a good one, and married him without knowing his real character. Oh! horrid fate! May I never be thus beguiled. But why need I speculate upon the subject of myself marrying? I shall never marry. It is as my profligate father says, the man I love cares nothing for me other than to do his duty as my guardian, and now that it comes to light that I am descended from vulgar lineage, the faint hope that I would sometime win him, is forever destroyed." "Perhaps you could keep

this barrier from his knowledge," whispered hope. "No, no, I love him too well to blindly lead him; and I am not at liberty to tell him the history of my parents. I am now beginning to again feel that I have no right to impose upon his kindness longer, yet—Oh! I cannot leave dear Cuthbert yet. Everything here, his dog, his horse, even the inanimate objects, associates me with my loved one. I must stay here awhile yet; in the meantime, I shall endeavor to turn my father's footsteps into the paths of sobriety. This I feel to be my duty. As he now is, I would die before I would consent to live with him, either in hut or in palace; he must reform. I shall soon try to get me a situation to teach school, though I promised my guardian never to mention this again. I shall not mention it to him, yet necessity compels me to make my own living, and I know I can teach."

Thus decided, she at last retired for the night. During the ensuing week the days came and went without much variation. Benton Percy had called, and upon two different occasions, again pressed his suit, while his aunt had been duly informed both in regard to her repeated refusal to become his wife, and also his meetings in the guise of her father.

"Don't give her up, Benton," was her advice

to him, "dog her steps. It has, so far, been just as I expected it would; you'll see that she will come around all right, only a little time and perseverance on your part is required."

"Don't you believe that I will leave the trap just as the game is about to enter; I could see that my tears and sobs affected her more than all else, and be assured that when we next meet in the mill-house, her old dad will bring forth such tears, sobs and appeals as will rend her heart terrifically."

"You are right, that will affect her more than threats; her heart is tender in the extreme, and you are clear-sighted enough to understand that this is the only channel through which we can reach her."

"At the mill-house again to-morrow evening, as her pretended father; the next day, as Mr. Benton Percy, are the notes on my card," said he, consulting a piece of paper he held in his hand. "Confound it, if my engagements ar'nt getting so numerous as to keep me shifting to keep up with them, and I'll assure I'm interested. But say, auntie, give me a lift. I'm quite dry, haven't had a dram to.day, not a red to buy it with, and you know a fellow needs a stimulant under all this excitement; it helps his courage."

"Lower your voice a little, please, or we might get ourselves into trouble. Here are fifty dollars, you need some money for board and other expenses, but for goodness sake don't drink so much as to make you incapable of carrying out our scheme; and remember, never come in your own name with your breath scented with whiskey."

"Don't be uneasy; I'll be straight when necessary," and he left her presence.

At their next meeting (as her father) he acted his part to perfection, exciting her sympathy so much as to evoke not only kind words from her, but she even kissed his false brow, and said: "Dear unfortunate father, I do indeed pity you, and if you will try to lead the life of a Christian I will from this day on, claim you as my father, and do all that my conscience will allow me to do to make you happy. Yes, I will leave this place, get me a school, and work for you the remainder of my life."

"And will you marry my friend?"

"I cannot; I do not love him."

"You will love him in time."

"I fear not."

"Margoleen, the day you marry Benton Percy I am a changed man. Upon no other terms will I give up my dram; you have it in your power

to save or damn your father's soul; which will you do? Oh! my child, save me! save me! I don't want to be lost!" and he cried so pitifully that a less tender heart than her's would have been moved.

CHAPTER XXV.

"I must now go," said she, "but I will see you again. I pray you consider what a sacrifice you ask, when you wish me to marry a man without giving him my heart. Remember also that in giving him an empty casket, I would do him a great wrong, which I fear would never be forgiven me."

The following morning Mrs. Lewis called her to her room, and closing the door, said, "Margoleen, feeling it my duty to advise you, I wish to speak upon a subject that greatly concerns your welfare."

"Certainly, Mrs. Lewis, I'm all attention."

"Well, I hoped ere this to have taken you to where you could see more of the world than Cuthbert and its vicinity, visited some fashionable resorts at least, yet as things have so far turned out, I expect it is all the better for you to have remained at home, since you have unboubtedly been the most fortunate girl I know of, to

have received such marked attention from so many nice gentlemen. There is one in particular whom I consider the nicest young man I have ever known, and that is Mr. Percy. He is all that is required of a gentleman, so kind to everyone; he is able to keep you in grand style, and I wish you and he would marry, Margoleen. I know it would please my son to see his little ward married to such a man."

"How do you know that Mr. Percy wishes me to marry him?"

"He has told me as much, and I don't think I ever saw a man more devoted to a woman than he is to you."

"And do you really thinks he loves me, Mrs. Lewis?" she questioned with earnestness.

"Did I not just tell you I am convinced of his sincerity; and I repeat, he will make you a most noble husband."

"I do not love him, and would not be so ignominious as to deceive him."

"You could not help but love him after marriage; through kindness he would teach you to love him; he undoubtedly loves you well enough, and 'love begets love' you know."

"I don't think I could marry a man unless I first loved him."

"My advice to you is this, consider the matter

well before you reject Benton Percy, for he is most worthy, and you would not only make a heaven for yourself by accepting him, but also please your friends. I don't mean to dictate, understand me, but merely suggest, that you may be cautious in your decision."

Everything calculated to move her in his favor was argued, yet she left Mrs. Lewis in obduracy. Some days later Margoleen received a letter, and although the chirography was unusually cramped and the language deviating, yet its foreign post-mark, and the name of her guardian inscribed at the bottom of its pages, caused her heart to throb with delight, and all unconscious of the cruel design of her enemies, her hungry heart devoured the contents of the letter, which read as follows:

My Dear Ward:

With great pleasure, I write to congratulate you on your good taste in selecting so worthy a gentleman as Mr. Benton Percy for your husband. I learn that you are engaged to be married to him; be assured that your decision gives me pleasure, and that you shall not go to him empty handed, as I shall settle a reasonable amount of money upon you. Tell my mother to order your trousseau at once, and your wedding shall be a grand affair. I cannot come home for a time, as I am somewhat interested in a young widow out here, whom I would like to bring back with me as mistress of Cuthbert, yet I prefer you to keep this confidential, Margoleen. Let no one read this letter, but burn it; you know

yourself how people are who are in love, haven't really sense enough to write. Again congratulating you on your good fortune, I remain, Your guardian,

ETHAN LEWIS.

She crumpled the letter in her hand, while for a time, in solemnity, her eyes sought the ceiling of her room, and she deeply pondered her guardian's expressed sentiment. A dark cloud now overshadowed the sweet hope and sunny feelings which a few moments before hovered around her imagination. When she first broke the seal and noted the signature of her heart's idol, she was at once enraptured with delight, and before reading the contents, she kissed and pressed it to her bosom as a rose, unconscious that it was encircled with sharp and pricking thorns, which were to inflict a *deep, deep* wound. Alas! how soon was she taught by these words that she had misplaced her affections.

"This is evidence enough that he loves not me, poor, insignificant plebian; have I indeed been silly enough to suppose that he would ever be likely to waste a serious thought upon me? This letter stamps the knowledge upon my heart that I must force my feelings to submit to a course of wholesome discipline, and remember that my pleasures were derived from the occa-

sional tokens of preference bestowed by a man of character upon a poor girl of obscure lineage; God help me to forget him," she prayed, as she faced the stern reality of her position.

A few nights after this she sat in her room, wondering how to proceed to get a situation to teach, when she heard a gentle tap at the door. "Come in," said she, when to her amazement the door was quickly pushed open, and in came the vagabond who claimed to be her father.

Instantly he locked the door, and turning to her who now stood pale with fear, said, "I wanted to see my child here, the place she calls home, so I slipped up way of the side entrance, hid in the hall, and watched my chances to get in here. Don't be scared, Margoleen, if we hear anyone coming you can hide me among some of these fine hangings (pointing to the portieres)."

"I greatly fear you will be detected."

"Maybe not, you are my child and I'll see you when I choose. You need not raise objections as to when or where; I'm comin' occasionally. Don't much care what becomes of me; you don't love me well enough to save my soul from hell."

"*Don't* talk so, I told you if you would reform your life I would do everything possible to make you happy."

"I'm only waiting to see what you are going to do," said he.

"Hush! some one is coming, do hurry and leave or you will be detected." She opened the door and looking out, decided there was no one near, and said, "You had best go now, father, the house will soon be locked for the night."

He obeyed, while she wrung her hands in agony for fear he would be discovered. From this time on, he occasionally stole into her room, causing her great annoyance, and often she was compelled to meet him in the mill-house. So violent were his threats and pitiful his appeals, her life was now one round of trouble. Hence, when Mr. Percy next requested her presence in the parlor, after kneeling at her feet and imploring her to marry him, she asked the question, "Mr. Percy, would you indeed marry a woman who does not love you?"

He very accurately determined her cause for asking this question and replied, "Margoleen, I love *you* so well I would marry *you* and trust to time for a reciprocation of my undying affection. O! will you not give me this hand (taking her hand in his). I will be so constant and true you will not fail to love me in return. Crown my life with happiness this night by promising to become my wife."

"Why not grant his request," whispered fate, "you have no hope of your own love being returned, and we are told that there is more real happiness in causing others to rejoice than in indulging our own desires. He says he is willing to accept my hand without my heart, and I have been frequently told that if united to a good man, love will come after marriage; he surely has the reputation of being worthy. Not only my unfortunate father, but also Mrs. Lewis and my guardian commend him, and it might save my sinful father's soul."

Actuated by these thoughts, she said, "Mr. Percy, if you are willing to take my hand without my heart, I will marry you and try to do my duty as a wife. But remember, I do not love you as I think a woman should love the man she calls husband."

"Thank you, my darling. O! how happy you have made me this night, and how earnestly will I strive to win your whole heart; yet I am not content until you name an early day for our wedding."

"We had best wait until my guardian comes home to set the time."

"No, I cannot consent to that; he may be absent quite a long time. Suppose we marry next month?"

"O, that would be entirely too early."

"Six weeks is long enough to make all preparations, Margoleen."

"Very well."

"So in six weeks from this day, which will be the fifth of October, you promise to become my wife?"

"I do."

And he sealed their engagement by placing a diamond ring upon her finger.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The ladies of the house were delighted at the news of the engagement, and gave them their richest blessing. The wedding trousseau was eagerly planned, and never before were orders dispatched in such haste.

Mrs. Lewis, this time without consulting her friend, wrote her son word to come home, as his ward was, in a few weeks, to be married to the very best catch in the country. "I never saw a couple more suited or devoted," she wrote; so enthusiastic was she at the prospect of having Benton Percy in the family, that she really forgot to mention the name of the groom elect, and Ethan, considering Waller Montgomery the most worthy gentleman of their acquaintance,

also remembering the conversation between himself and Margoleen, which caused him (Ethan) to so abruptly leave home, naturally thought his friend the favored one. His first thought was, "I cannot go; I cannot see her marry another man, even though he be my dear friend; I shall write and say it will be impossible for me to be present on the occasion of the marriage, yet they have my approval and very best wishes."

So he answered the letter to this effect, which was quite gratifying to Percy and his accomplice, as they much preferred Ethan's absence until after the marriage knot was securely tied. Mrs. Lewis, having received from her son a check for as much money as could possibly be necessary, was at her zenith of pleasure purchasing and planning for the occasion.

Several days elapsed after Ethan had answered his mother's letter, when a longing seized him to once more behold his ward the happy maiden that he left her, unfettered by the bondage of marriage law. So potent was this desire that, regardless of his answer to his mother, he packed his valise and turned his steps homeward. "I shall take them by surprise," said he, "as they will not be expecting me after reading my letter." So he boarded the train, took his seat by an open window in the smoking car, lit a

cigar, and watching the trees and prominent objects in hurried flight go by, wondered why it was that his friend had himself failed to write him something in regard to his engagement to his ward. "He surely should have written; it is not like him to treat me thus," he ruminated. "Perhaps he understands the true state of my feelings towards her, and gentle and kind as he is, thinks to say as little about it as possible. He would, perhaps, help me to bear my sorrow." However, he was soon at home, and found, to his great astonishment, that instead of Waller Montgomery, Benton Percy was to be the bridegroom. He had not been favorably impressed with Percy from the first night of his acquaintance, and was very much inclined to raise his voice in opposition, yet he could bring no especial charge against him, and if he was Margoleen's choice, why complain? He did not believe in matchmaking, consequently decided to resign his preference for his friend and bury his *own* trouble as best he could. Margoleen, apparently, was as happy as the occasion demanded, yet she had grown so thin and pale since Ethan last saw her, that at first he was quite shocked. However, her feigned cheerfulness caused him to consider her decline the effect of excitement. "She certainly loves her intended, and speaks

of him as if he was the approved of the world,'' thought he, ''and I ought not to envy their happiness.''

A few days after his return to Cuthbert, Miss Clifton one evening remarked in his presence, that she would like to take á walk in the orchard. ''I want some good apples,'' said she, ''and prefer to go myself for them, as I'm sure a walk would do me good, after having been closely housed all the week.''

''Where are mother and Margoleen?'' he asked.

''They are upstairs busy sewing, I believe.''

''Well, get your hat, while I go for a basket, and we will go.''

Together they strolled among the trees, the heiress designedly leading him in the direction of the mill-house, until finally, when in full view of its door, she said, ''Let us rest, here is a nice place,'' seating herself upon the trunk of an uprooted apple tree that now lay prone upon the ground.

It was now growing quite late, and as they sat talking about the wedding, Ethan saw the form of a woman come out of the door of the deserted house, and without raising her head to notice their presence, walk right by them and on towards the mansion. He did not discover that it was his ward, however, as she wore a

sun-bonnet pulled down over her face, and it was now about dusk, until his companion said to him, "Isn't that Margoleen?"

He looked again to be assured that it was indeed no other than she, who, unconscious of their presence, hurried by.

Just then they arose from their seats to start, when, touching his arm, his companion excitedly exclaimed, "Look! Mr. Lewis, see that man climbing out the mill-house window?"

He turned to see a man leap from the designated window to the ground, and flee. Impulsively he started to run after him, yet the remembrance that he was unarmed, and in company with a lady who clung persistently to his arm and implored him not to leave her, as it was so late she feared to be left alone, he abandoned the idea but determined to solve the mystery later. "Who on earth could that woman have been? I first thought it looked like Margoleen, but I am sure now that it was not she," said the scheming hypocrite, yet her true object was accomplished, a seed of mistrust was planted in his breast, though he had sufficient presence of mind to mislead his companion in regard to his supposition, and laughingly said, "that's a good joke on Margoleen, to have mistaken that mulatto girl, whom I sometimes see passing

through my plantation, for her; perhaps we had best not tell her of our mistake, though, as her mind is preoccupied now with other things, she has no ear for jokes,'' noble soul that he was, although he was thoroughly convinced that it *was* she, he would not admit as much to Miss Clifton, who now felt that she had been unsuccessful in her attempt, since he refused to believe the womon in question to be his ward, knowing that she as the relative of Margoleen's intended husband would be expected to expose her, thereby conflicting with her heart's desire, which we understand is to get her married and safely out of the way, she decided she had best let him think as he would, and wait a more opportune time to again try her game, when he could not fail to mistake her, and she herself would have some way to appear perfectly ignorant of the fact.

That night when they arose from the supper table, Ethan slipped a note into Margoleen's hand. As a precious morsel she deferred the sweet pleasure of reading it until she had gone to her room that night, when shutting herself within this sanctum, she read the astounding words that almost seared her brain: ''I saw you come out of the old mill-house this evening. Also saw, a few moments later, a man climb

from its window; Margoleen, explain to me what this means.''

''Oh! what shall I do?'' she groaned in distress. ''I can not tell him, and by my refusing to do so, what will he think of me?'' All night she cried and bemoaned her fate, and the following morning her sad face smote his heart as she handed him the reply to his note.

''Believe me not guilty of wrong,'' she wrote, ''yet I can not explain the cause of my visit to the mill-house; believe me innocent, and question me no more in regard to the matter,'' was all she could say.

''It appears quite strange that she refuses to explain, yet I cannot believe her other than purity; her face shows that she speaks the truth,'' and he tried to dispel the thought from his mind of her being anything save a pure, sweet girl, who, perhaps, had some good reason for not telling him her secret. Yet, the subject was not so easily forgotten, for it was only a few nights after this, Miss Clifton asked him to come upstairs and examine her call bell, that by some means had gotten out of repair, when on his way down he saw a man steal out of Margoleen's room and flee down the side entrance out into the dark. He could control himself no longer, but after a fruitless chase in the black-

ness of the night, he, without mentioning the fact to anyone, went back to Margoleen's door and demanded her to open it; she did so, and stood trembling like a culprit before him. "You know what brought me here, Margoleen," said he, closing the door, and standing with his back against it as he continued, "I *command* you to tell me who the man was that left this room a few moments since?"

"I cannot, oh! I cannot! Be merciful and ask me no more; some day all will be explained to you, and then instead of censuring, you will pity my position at this hour; until then my lips are sealed. I will tell you no more. I am soon to leave your house, until then pray leave me in peace." And she now sobbed convulsively, while he left her presence believing that she, like many of her sex, was deceitful, yea, false; nevertheless, he locked what he termed her imprudence in his own bosom, and decided to remain and see her married, thinking, perhaps, she was better suited, after all, to be the wife of Benton Percy than the wife of his noble friend.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The fifth of October dawned a dark, blustering day. Deep toned thunder rolled along the

vaulted sky, and fiery darts of lightning flashed upon the earth.

Many of her friends who were invited to witness the marriage remained at home, fearing to risk the inclemency of the weather. However, the wild commotion of the elements did not deter the purpose of the treacherous fiend, for despite the storm, a closed carriage, drawn by two prancing black steeds, halted at Cuthbert, when out stepped the bridegroom and his attendants, in wedding attire. Aunt Silvie, who with her chin propped upon her hand, was meditatively gazing into the embers of the kitchen fireplace, when Tricksy came to her, crying, as if a funeral was in procession. "Don't cry, chile," said the sympathetic old darkey, "God will take keer ob dat pore innocent gurl, but if I war Mars Ethan I'd be 'shamed to let dat skylarky take her off sich a day 's dis; Missus says dey will be in a a buggy wid curtains and storm robes, but pshaw! I wouldn't let her go in dis weather; he mought wait a spell. It do 'pear to me dat Miss Ira and dat honey ob her's (alluding to the heiress) will both go distracted to git her married to dat man, but pore chile, I'm 'feared she'll rue de day she sot eyes on him."

"Ethan's coolness toward Margoleen, since the episode of a few nights previous, had stung

her sensitive nature and heightened her self-respect.

"He has no confidence in me," thought she, "else he would have believed me when I plead my unintention of wrong, and assured him that time would vindicate me." So but few words passed between them, until, like a lamb before its shearer, she was led to the hymeneal altar and made the lawful wife of Benton Percy.

After the ceremony was over, Ethan called her aside, and offering her a check for $3,000, said, "there is a bridal present from me, Margoleen; it will buy you a comfortable home."

Tears that had been so difficult to keep back, now flowed from her eyes, as she said, "thank you, Mr. Lewis; I decline to accept any more favors from you, since I fear I have already been mistaken in receiving so much from your hands. I shall ever remember your former kindness to me, and trust some day to be able to repay you."

"You will act sensible to accept this check, Margoleen."

"*I will not!*" and, wiping her eyes, she turned and left him quite astonished at her refusal. A few moments later, however, her husband came out in search of his hat, when Ethan said to him: "Here, Percy, is a check for $3,000,

which my ward, upon some trivial plea, refuses to accept."

The proffered check was instantly whisked into his pocket, and in great haste he thanked the donor.

The master of Cuthbert remained at home while his mother and Miss Clifton accompanied them as far as New York on their bridal tour. After remaining with them they decided to return to their respective homes, leaving them to spend their honeymoon in that city.

After the first three weeks, Benton was so particularly attentive and kind that his wife really began to feel that perhaps her advisers were correct in saying that love would come after marriage. "I may in time learn to love him; at any rate I shall try with my whole heart to return his affection."

Beguiled by his hypocrisy, her life for a short time, if not happy, was at least content, until the last week of their sojourn the tables began to turn. Repeatedly her husband came in with red, swollen eyes and fetid breath, that plainly showed him to have been drinking. The knowledge of this fact distressed her greatly, though she did not complain, until finally one day he came reeling into the room and said, "Margoleen, hic, pack, hic, our trunks and hic, let's go

home! They'll get the last red cent, hic, I've got, if I stay here much longer."

Without remonstrance she got him to lie down as quickly as possible. In drunken slumber he soon snored loudly, while she proceeded to obey orders and make ready for their departure. He had told her so much about their pretty home that she longed to see it, and also realized that it would perhaps be best to go away from the luring vice of others, and the dissipation so prevalent in cities, that the temptation might be less. Hence, when he awoke, apparently much sobered, she said to him, "Well, I have our belongings in readiness to go to our home tomorrow."

"Did I tell you to get ready to leave here?" he demanded.

"You certainly did, and I'm real glad to go."

"Where to, Madam Percy?"

"To our home, to be sure."

A contemptuous smile played about his mouth as he answered, with slang, "All right, old gal, we will go in the morning."

The following morning they started, and after a journey of three days duration, the cars stopped at a little railway station, when taking her by the arm he said, "Well, we get off here; let's get out before the passengers crowd the aisle."

Glad to end the tedious ride, she followed him out upon the platform, where she was expecting to be met, and conveyed to a lovely home, by private conveyance belonging to her liege lord, but instead of this, he did not so much as hail a cab, but took her hand satchel and starting afoot along the side of the railroad said to her, "This way, Margoleen, we will just walk up; it is not very far."

In silent wonder she walked behind him, when to her amazement, he took her into an old dilapidated car that had been abandoned by the railroad company. Two boxes formed the tenement wherein a vulgar woman stood with bare, red arms, over a smoking tub of hot soap-suds, while at her feet tumbled three or four tangled-haired childred upon the floor.

"Mother, this is my wife," said he to the woman washing.

Margoleen was wondering if she herself was indeed awake or was she dreaming, when the woman in question turned upon them and said, "She's a dainty piece to bring to such quarters as these, besides I have my hands more than full to feed these little ones without keeping you and your fine lady up. I can't get much washing to do now, and you know it is all the means of support I have. You never *was* no help to

me nor never will be, so I would rather you would take yourself off at once."

Margoleen could stand no more, but fainted at her feet. They raised her up, placed her upon the rude bed, and while for a few moments she lay unconscious, he drew several bills from his pocked, handed them to his mother, and said, "Be quiet, let us stay with you for a few days. To-morrow I will look about and get us a home. She'll be a fortune to you and me, for she has one to back her who has the proper stuff. So don't fret any more; you see she can't stand it; get to work and help me restore her; cook us a good supper, and I think by morning she will be all right."

The poor thing was almost crazed with disappointment, yet the restoratives used soon revived her. That night, however, she did not sleep at all, but cried and prayed alternately. The next day he left her in the care of his mother for a time, but was not long absent until he returned to inform her that he had purchased them a home.

"Why did you deceive me by telling me you already had a nice home to take me to?" and the thought of her guardian's words, "It will buy you a home," when he offered her the check for $3,000, came into her mind.

"All is fair in love and war, you know; I feared to tell you I was poor; are you going to love me less that I have no property?"

"No, but you did wrong to deceive me."

He conveyed her to a cottage of three rooms, her eyes were red with weeping, yet she set to work to make their home look as comfortable as possible, and tried to accept her fate with the hope that she would at least reform the life of her sinful father, who had told her, at their last meeting, that he would join them when they were settled in their new home. She had thought strange that as such a dear friend of her father, why it was her husband had never spoken to her of him, but was content to believe that he rather preferred to wait awhile before the third party should share his alleged happiness.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

As months elapsed, Margoleen's troubles increased; instead of learning to love her husband, his profanity and tyrannical disposition drove her heart further and further from him, yet her allegiance as his wife caused her to bear for a long time the many cruel contests to which he subjected her, for now that he had her safely in his foils, he unsheathed himself to come forth

the true demon that he was. She was now only eighteen years of age, a mere unsophisticated child, and knew not how to release herself from this yoke of bondage. At times she was tempted to leave him, but no, this would put her name in the mouth of the public, and this she did not feel that she could stand, and so she lived on, praying morning, noon and night to God to release her by death from the man whose touch was now repulsive, and presence loathsome to her.

Yet, for some wise purpose, she was spared to be abused. Often he came home drinking, and cursed her because she would not ask her guardian for more money. The $3,000, whose receipt had been kept a secret from her until it was well nigh squandered by his profligacy, was now entirely gone, and many were the times he had tried to coerce her to write and solicit more. "You will have it to do or starve," he would sometimes argue.

"I would prefer to starve, rather than to ask him for money."

"You will get over your d—d high notions and come round all right I dare say."

Then he would taunt her with not loving him as a wife should love her husband. More than once he went into another room, fired his pistol

and fell heavily upon the floor, to make her think he had shot himself and thereby arouse her sympathy and gain his desire. The first time he did this the poor girl almost sank with grief, and was tempted to take her own life, so sad was she at the thought of causing him to commit suicide. She did not think of his so ignominiously deceiving her, and springing to his side was about to tell him she would do as he wished if he would only live, when, to her astonishment, she found that he was only taking this means to make her yield to his desire to call on her guardian for money. Yet his base attempt only served to heighten her obduracy, and when he next resorted to this means she was the more invincible, until finally he became so much enraged at her as to take every means to make her life as wretched as possible, often leaving her as long as two or three days without food or fire. She was too proud to murmur her distresses to others, consequently suffered from cold and hunger. With the exception of one letter from Mrs. Lewis, she had never heard from her friends, and this, under the existing circumstances, she was too proud to answer.

"I want you and your husband to make us a visit, soon," ran the specified letter, "I am quite lonely, now; my son seems to grow, every

day he lives, more and more averse to the society of ladies; really, I fear he is a confirmed bachelor. Blanche came back and spent a couple of months with me, but she has gone home and I don't know how to content myself.

I would go abroad but my health has declined very much since you left; in fact, I'm now compelled to stay in my room a great deal. I don't know any news to write, only that Mrs. Moorleigh, our housekeeper, a few weeks since, was quietly married to an old farmer near here, and is comfortably settled in her new home. His name is Jonathan Bradley, and he is not only a nice, clever old man, but has ample means to live upon. I am glad she has done well, but, oh my! you don't know how much I miss her; things don't go on here as they did before she left, yet Aunt Silvie and I do surprisingly well to have so much responsibility left upon us, and my health delicate. Tricksy is crazy for you to come home on a visit, and says she wants her master to let her go back with you when you come.

I suppose you are so happy in your new home that you never think of your dear friends; is that the reason you never write? Yet, you must not get to be selfish; remember, we would love

to hear from you, *at least* occasionally. With love to yourself and husband, I remain,

Yours, affectionately, IRA LEWIS."

This letter she wore in her bosom. It was the only tidings she had received from her friends since she left, yet she did not answer it. She had been cruelly deceived in her husband, but would not dare to go to her benefactor for sympathy, she was too proud for this. He had turned a deaf ear to her appeals for mercy when she was persecuted in his own home, she would not solicit his confidence now. So she never wrote back at all, preferring to bear her troubles in silence.

"It is so very strange that my father has not yet made his appearance, nor my husband mentioned his name since we were married," she soliloquized when alone one night, after she had eaten her scanty supper and was thinking of the man who claimed to be her father, when the door was pushed open and in walked the very individual of whom she was thinking.

"Father!" she exclaimed, "is it indeed you?"

"Yes, it is I, and you see I am here at last. Where is Benton? I want him to get me some whiskey; I'm awful dry. Stir yourself, old girl, and get me a good supper."

"I cannot get you much supper; I have only

a little bread in the house, and I have not seen my husband for three days."

"It's a lie, madam."

"Come, father, behold your child who has been sacrificed for you; reform your life; do not my surroundings warn you of the great concession on my part, to marry the man of your choice?"

"Whose choice, Margoleen?"

"Yours, indeed, sir; the man before me who calls himself my father."

"And do you not really know who this man is?"

"He has sworn to me that he is my father," she replied.

"Ha! ha!" laughed he, pulling off the grey beard and wig, also the garb of clothing that had hitherto disguised him, and standing erect before her, said: "You know me now, don't you? Your husband and dad are one and the same; did you never suspect this? If not, you are certainly not a very close observer. When shall we meet in the mill-house again? I could make any girl under the sun marry me if I set my head to do so; don't you acknowledge your husband to be a shrewd fellow? Come! I've had enough of your airs; I mean to be obliged, and I want you to get to work and write to that

old slink you call guardian, and ask him to set us up again. I'm run out, I tell you, got not a red cent, and am compelled to give up this house to-morrow; will you do it now without further argument? I've wasted a heap of breath on you; I say, will you write at once and ask him for some more money?"

"*I will not!*" she said emphatically, "besides, I would have you understand that I consider you a brute in human shape."

"Stop! Go no further, or I shall knock you down; you know not whom you are talking to," he said, with anger gleaming in his eyes.

"I am no longer afraid of you, Benton Percy; you are a dirty villain, whose soul is blackened with sin."

He drew a chair to strike her, when frantic with grief she bared her breast and said, "kill me! kill me! I crave to die!"

A strong blow felled her to the floor, where wounded and bleeding she lay unconscious until her persecutor, believing he had killed her, fled. Yet she was not seriously hurt, and when she arose to find that she was left alone, she washed the blood from her face and neck, and although quite faint, she gathered her most valuable articles together, which consisted of her engagement ring, a watch, and her mother's

picture, that she had worn around her neck since she could first remember, and which was now attached to the gold necklace given to her by Belle Seaton. Shuddering over the few coals of fire, she awaited the first ray of daylight, and going to a jeweler sold him the ring for fifty dollars. This enabled her to take the train and go a goodly distance. Her mind was so fraught with grief that she wss incapable of forming any definite plans for the future. She would not consent to go back to those who had been her friends; no, no, this she would never do, for although Cuthbert had been her happy home, it had also been a place of sorrow to her.

"I will go by there," she decided, "I must once more behold him (Ethan) before I die."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The pale, haggard girl went back to the neighborhood of her old home, watched for an opportunity, and without detection stole to the old mansion, peeped through the library window, and what did she behold there? Ah! yes it was indeed he, the idol of her heart, who with a stern and clouded brow, sat by a small table. His cheek rested against his hand, an open book

lay beside him, yet his eyes seemed to penetrate the ceiling.

The cold night wind lashed her scanty clothing about her, yet the poor half;crazed thing kept her position at the window for some time, enjoying the sweet pleasure of studying his face without his knowledge. And shall we censure her for indulging in what some whited-sepulchers would term vice. No, we must remember that her life had, by an unkind interference, been sacrificed to a mistake, and before we explain that she believed this would be the very last time cn earth that she would ever see him, let us examine ourselves minutely. Self-righteousness is not religion, and a distinguished writer has said, "Conventionality is not morality." Her marriage had been stipulated by others who took advantage of her tender years and led her into trouble. "Vice and virtue are often confounded, appearance should not be mistaken for truth; narrow humane doctrine, that only tend to elate and magnify a few, should not be substituted for the world redeeming crown of Christ."

She meant no harm, and she left the window to flee without fear in the darkness, and reach the city in time to catch the train that was to carry her away—away from her beloved one. But for him refusing to have confidence in her

when she had previously plead her innocence, she would have dared to go in and confess her mistake to him, yet the remembrance of his face when he coldly turned from her deep sorrow, chilled her heart and drove her in desperation from him. Her watch was now too sold, and she traveled on until at last her money was all gone, and the conductor, leaning over her shoulder, said, "You must get off, you have already gone farther than your ticket entitles you to ride."

She lowered her eyes, tucked her light wrap about her, and left the cars. It was now about five o'clock in the evening of a cool winter day, and she found herself in a large town without friends or one cent of money. She had parted with all she had, save the necklace and the locket that held her mother's picture; these she felt that she could not give up, although she had tasted no food since noon the day before, when she had ventured into a restaurant and bought a sandwich. The previous night she had slept none, as she had left Cuthbert about nine o'clock and walked back to the city in time to catch the midnight train. She had rested her poor tired head against the cushioned back of the seat upon which she rode, and tried to sleep, yet the attempt was fruitless, since her mind was too

much absorbed with her trip to Cuthbert. What to do she did not know; it seemed that her head would burst with pain. Finally she decided to go in at a house near by, and beg a cup of coffee and a night's lodging. Accordingly she knocked gently at the door, and was met by a tall, blue-eyed lady, who asked haughtily, "What do you want here?"

"If you please, give me a cup of coffee and a night's lodging. I'm sick and have no money."

"Indeed, no, all such as you should be driven out of the country. I don't see how you could have the face to enter decent people's houses (viewing her suspiciously). Get out from here immediately," and the door was ruthlessly shut in her face.

Crushed, and too timid to try further, she crept into an old barn, and upon a bed of straw shivered the entire night, and when morning dawned she for a time was unable to arise. Overcome by hunger and cold, at last she fell into a deep sleep, that lasted until the next evening, when two little boys, on their way from school, set their dinner basket upon the sill of the open door, and began the following conversation:

"Say, Dick, what will yer take for this here French-harp?"

"I guess I'll take a dime. I give a dime fur it, and taint hurt."

"I'de say taint hurt," was the reply, as placing it to his mouth he again tried its capacity. "I'll give yer five cents, its done had five cents worth blowed out of it already."

"No, I shant trade, less you'll throw in that white allie you plumpt the middler so slick with this morning."

"All right, it's a trade," and as they proceeded to exchange property, Margoleen, whose hungry eyes were now looking eagerly upon the basket, arose and asked:

"Little boys, won't you give a poor woman, who is almost starving, something to eat from your basket?"

So white and haggard she looked, that at first they thought her a ghost, and were tempted to run, but her kind voice reassured them so much as to excite sympathy, and proffering her the basket, one stood with his hands clasped behind him, the other in close proximity, whilst they watched her devour the one boiled egg and two half biscuits which was all that remained of their dinner.

"Thank you, boys," said she, "I will never forget your kindness, and now can you tell me where I can get a drink of water?"

"You are much obliged," said the would-be polite boys.

"There is a spring just over the hill (pointing with his finger). Give me that cup out of the basket, Dick," said one of her friends, "and I'll fetch her some myself."

"No, no, I perhaps can go to it." She arose and started off, while the boys, feeling that their kindness to what they termed a runaway woman had almost amounted to heroism, went home and related the wonderful event to their parents, who, not so sympathetic as their innocent children, thought best to go down to the barn and start the nuisance at once, yet when they got there, to their surprise, the object in question had, by the nourishing bite from the school basket, and the morning's sleep, been enabled to move on in a direction she knew not whither. More than once had she gone in at houses and begged for work, but without ever being asked the cause of her misfortune, was always turned away, as a character to be spurned.

Pity and justice are often withheld from the defenseless, and why the world is so much more cruel and unforgiving towards the gentler sex is a question unanswered. On and on she trudged, until away from this large town some three or four miles, night again came upon her, and not

only was she threatened to be out in the dark, but also a heavy rain had begun to fall. Finally, realizing that she could see to go no farther in the pelting storm, she crouched behind some old boards and rubbish that lay slanting upon a fence, and prayed God to take her to that mother who ever provided a home for her, if not in grandeur at least in comfort. She had now been out three nights, but this was the most severe, and she less able to stand the cold wintry blast. When morning came she could not stand upon her feet, but looking out from her rude abode, she discovered that she was near a cabin, from which presently an old lady came out, and throwing a halter over the head of a little brindle cow, placed her stool and proceeded to milk. Span spat fell the milk into the tin vessel, when Margoleen felt that she must have a drink of it or starve to death. Again and again she endeavored to stand, but alas! she was too weak, her strength was gone, and crawling upon her hands and feet she managed to get near the woman and cry, "Give me one drink of milk; I'm starving to death!"

The woman looked round to behold the most pitiful object she had ever seen. Her hair, which necessity had compelled her to uncoil as a shield from the cold, hung in clotted masses over her

shoulders; her face was almost as white as marble, her eyes bloodshotten, her clothes muddy and drenched with rain. The heart of the old lady was instantly touched, and holding the bucket to the sufferer's mouth she bade her drink her fill. Prone upon the ground she eagerly grasped the rim of the vessel, and like the starved thing that she was, continued to drink until the old lady feared she probably was doing wrong to let her have so much at once, and bade her quit. She did so, and thanking her time and again, at length cried, "O! I am so miserable! I am sick and have nowhere to lay my head."

She then fell back in a swoon, and the old lady called to her husband, excitedly, "Come here quick, Edwin, and help me carry this poor thing into the house."

CHAPTER XXX.

Edwin Frazier stood just around the corner of the little yard, that was hedged in with newly rived pailing, calling pig-ew-ee to three or four well-fed shoats, when raising the slop-bucket to empty its contents into the trough, he was startled by the shrill voice of his wife demanding his aid instantly.

The impolite swine, without regard for Uncle Edwin's gray hairs, ran pell-mell towards the

trough, thereby uptripping him, and spilling the buttermilk over his shoes. One long grunt from the good natured old man was his retaliation to his assailants. Picking himself up as quickly as possible, he left them to scramble over the bucket, and hurrying in the direction from which he heard his wife's call, inquired, "What's the matter, Katie?"

"Look, old man, at this poor creature. Let's get her indoors as quickly as we can; I fear she is already dead."

Raising her in his sinew arms, he carried her into the house and placed her upon a clean couch by the fire, while his good wife bathed her face and hands with camphor, and took off the wet, muddy shoes that clung to her tiny feet. Hour after hour the sympathetic people, who had no children of their own, nursed and tried to revive her; every attention that their humble circumstances would permit was duly given her, and the next morning a little pink-faced baby was also dependent upon the charity of Uncle Edwin and Aunt Katie Frazier.

When Margoleen first heard the voice of her child (although it was not the offspring of the man she loved) her heart instinctively responded to its cry. It is a mother only, that can realize the sacredness of the hour when the first cry of

her infant awakens her to the fact that her Heavenly Father has intrusted it to her care, and at this moment she consecrates her life to the charge. Nor was this poor outcast an exception to the rule. Although she had nothing upon earth, no home, no money, she felt that she must now live for her child's sake; yea, she felt that she was no longer alone in the world. The father of the child had brutally treated her, yet she censured not this innocence with his misgivings, but loved it, and prayed that her life might be spared for its sake. Yet, alas, her motherhood was only of one day's duration, for when the sun went down that evening, her infant's life went back to the God who gave it.

Uncle Edwin, who was a carpenter by trade, made a little pine casket, while Aunt Katie's fingers, which had grown somewhat stiff from honest toil, busily plied her needle and thread until the little body was neatly arrayed for burial. Apparently, its mother lay unconscious of her loss, while the congenial old pair in solemnity placed it in its little grave beneath a spreading plum tree in the garden.

"It seems a pity for it to die," said Aunt Katie, on their way back to the house, "she had her heart set on it and I really thought she would

get well, but as soon as she found that her child was dead, she just seemed to give up."

"Poor thing," answered her husband, "she's nothing more than a child herself, and Katie has it not occured to you that she looks like our dear daughter Mildred. Do you not remember that gleam of gratitude that shone in her eyes for any little office of kindness bestowed upon her; I say, Katie, have you forgotten that heavenly look of our darling?"

"No, Edwin, and I'll admit that this poor girl reminds me of her."

"Have you been able to find out anything about her?"

"No, she has not so much as told me her name, yet time and again she has implored me to believe her innocent of wrong."

"I am pure yet unfortunate; bear with me, and I will explain all when I'm able to talk," was all she had said concerning herself.

One morning, some six or seven weeks afterwards, Margoleen awoke from a long spell of fever that had well nigh put an end to her earthly troubles, and looking around the tidy little room, whose walls were coated with whitewash, and whose bare floor bespoke the cleanliness of its occupants, she said: "Aunt Katie, I feel so much better this morning, and why is it,

when I have prayed so earnestly to die, that I am still here? Is it because God really don't want me?''

''Hush! dear child, it is wicked to talk in this way; you should pray, 'not my will, but Thine, be done,' to your Father in Heaven, and he will never forsake you. Perhaps it is for a divine purpose he spares you, and you should thank him for permitting you to live through your troubles, that you may better prepare yourself for the blessed reward He has promised to those who obey Him.''

''Oh! but my heart is broken, I'm alone in the world with nothing to live for.''

''Indeed, you have plenty to live for. Remember, this is a sinful world, and through your instrumentality, many souls might be brought to Christ; God loves a broken heart, but not a divided one. The Scriptures tell us that he is also a jealous God; perhaps you have loved someone else more than the Savior. We are not forbidden to love the things of this world, but this love must be subordinate to that One who created us. Our afflictions are sometimes sent for our instruction; Christ has no disciple that is not introduced into the school of affliction; I repeat, you should not pray to die, but bide God's own time, and pray for a deeper sense of

your own weakness, and a firmer reliance on His strength." Aunt Katie was not to be considered an educated woman, yet she was possessed of the highest natural ability, and above all, was a sincere Christian. True piety elevates its possessor in the scale of being, exalts the feelings, dignifies the character, and sanctifies the heart; it provides a suitable relief in every trying state."

So this good old lady beautifully gilds our heroine's afflictions with the enlivening beams of hope. The sun now shone in the midst of a shower, and imprinted on the gloomy firmament a rainbow of mercy, causing her to exclaim: "Dear, good soul! truly, you have led me to the feet of Jesus; I can now look back and see how I have allowed my heart to clamor more for my own material happiness than I have for the world's benefit. Henceforth my life is dedicated to the good of others, I am now willing to accept my fate and murmur not at the all-wise providence of God. Come close to me, Aunt Katie; I want to hug you and then explain to you who I am and where I came from. You have been, oh! so kind to me, and 'tis just that you should know whom you have befriended." Aunt Katie drew her chair close to the bed, and after allowing the thin, wasted arm to encircle

her neck, soothingly took her hand in her's and listened attentively while she related her sad history. "Poor, dear one," answered the old lady, wiping the tears from her wrinkled face with the large bandanna handkerchief worn at her waist, "your lot has indeed been a hard one."

"How long did you say you lived with this brutal man?"

"Thirteen months."

"Well, I don't see how you stood his treatment as long as you did. I'm not the one to separate man and wife, yet now that you are away from him, my advice to you is to remain so forever. Won't you stay here along with me and the old man? We have no children, our only child died some three years since with that dread disease, consumption. She was not quite eighteen years of age, and was the joy of our lives. Since her death, Edwin and I are quite lonely at times; he's out at work a great deal, and I have no one to stay with me when he's gone. It would give us great pleasure to have you live with us; we have talked the matter over, he and I; we want you to fill the place or our darling Mildred."

Tears of gratitude flowed from Margoleen's eyes as she replied, "I would be only too glad, yet you have already shown me more kindness

than I perhaps should accept from those who have to labor for maintenance, and no doubt I have been a great deal of expense to you."

"Well, we don't regret doing what we consider our Christian duty. We own this little home, and are willing to divide our income, which I'll admit is not very large. We are getting old, and need some one of younger years as a comfort to our old age. Will you consent to live with us?"

"Upon conditions I will stay."

"What are the conditions?"

"First, that you will allow me to work for you all I can."

"I don't object to you helping me work," she interrupted.

"Second, you must agree for me to wear an assumed name, as I don't wish any clue to my existence known."

"I am willing to this. I don't think you would be doing wrong to conceal yourself from that brute."

"Then my name henceforth must be Agnes Broke instead of Margoleen Melbroke. No one must know but what I am distantly related to you. I shall stay, dear Aunt Katie, and endeavor to cause you not to regret your kindness to me."

CHAPTER XXXI.

Eight years have washed the shores of time since Margoleen Melbroke so mysteriously entered the family of Edwin Frazier. To-day we behold them in her lovely home, that is situated upon a beautiful mountain, some three hundred feet above the common level of the earth, at the base of which nestles the old cabin of the Fraziers. Sometime since, through Margoleen's earnest solicitation, it has been vacated, yet preserved as a souvenir, and the old people dwell with their adopted child, who is now a famous authoress, and by her pen has accumulated a handsome fortune. The benevolence of this old couple, together with the beautiful scenery around their humble home, which we will describe as being situated at the foot of the mountain in the suburbs of a little railroad town, where factories and churches bespeak the industry and morality of its inhabitants, causing her heart to expand with new life; ambition stirred her to try to do something to compensate their kindness. "Write a book," whispered a mysterious voice. "You, even you, might sow a seed to germinate, yea, blossom, in some depraved soul, and turn its steps towards Heaven." Her troubles were alleviated by this longing which had begun to spring in her soul. In the evenings or mornings

she loved to climb to the summit of this grand eminence, and look over upon the village that stretched out to full view. Nor did she fail to draw inspiration from this mound of natural beauty, the forest trees, the singing birds, the frisking squrrel, the bubbling spring that gushed from the ledge of rock and flowed abundantly adown its side, actuated her to write a story that as an unpretentious bark, she tremblingly sent out upon the ocean of life, but to return to her fraught with honor and wealth. The public knew not her real name, consequently her former acquaintances knew not that the now celebrated star of literature was the ill-used waif of Lowland Inn.

She had never heard of her husband since the night she had fled from his cruel treatment, upon which occasion he sneaked back to the house to find that he had not, as he supposed, really killed her, yet he rejoiced that she was gone, leaving him free to seek other fields of gain. He was now convinced that she was inexorable in regard to calling on her guardian for money, so without search or inquiry he went on his way rejoicing that he was rid of her; and now for a time we will leave her, Aunt Katie and Uncle Edwin together in their lovely mountain home, while we travel back to find what has

become of the family at Cuthbert, including the heiress of Pine Grove.

On the morning of Margoleen's marriage, we remember, she left her guardian under a cloud of suspicion. When the wedding party had gone, he shut himself up with reflections such as render us misanthropic and disgusted with the world, corroded with disappointment against womankind, and for a time sought to drown his troubles in dissipation, though his recklessness never amounted to debauchery.

Some two years later Blanche Clifton was again on a visit to Cuthbert, using her most fascinating powers to ensnare its master into her foils; in fact we might term this last attempt as a life or death struggle, when one day a dispatch came summoning his presence to the death bed of a criminal, who was sentenced to be hanged on the following Friday, but whom God was allowing to pass from this world into the next without the disgraceful rope around his neck; so overcome was he at his sentence that he at once sank, and it was now an evident fact that death would claim the doomed man ere the appointed day for the gallows to claim its victim. Without mentioning the cause of his departure, Ethan left his mother, who was now in most wretched health, in the hands of her favorite, and hurried on for

a distance of about one hundred miles, wondering all the while what the dying man wanted to tell him, as the message had stated that he must tell him before he entered the presence of his God.

On entering the jail he was conducted to a cell where the poor wretch lay frantically screaming. "Bring me to Ethan Lewis, the master of Cuthbert, I *must* tell him before I die," he was pleading, when the jailor said, "Here is your man."

"Thank God," was the reply. "Come close to me, Ethan Lewis, I want to confess to you how I have wronged you and the innocent one whom you have so devotedly loved."

"Benton Percy!" he exclaimed, "is it you?"

"Yes, it is I, who by the help of my villainous Aunt Blanche, have so steeped my soul in sin that I am at last doomed to be hanged, yet the sight of the gallows does not frighten me so much as the thought of dying without telling you the great wrong I have done you and the poor girl I married beneath your roof."

"Where is Margoleen?" demanded Ethan, pale with emotion. Is she dead? I say, villain! have you killed her?" seizing the doomed man as if to put an end to his days at once, when the ghastly lips parted and said, "let me tell you my story, and then, oh! how glad I will be for you to kill me."

This speech arrested his violence, but he repeated his inquiry, "I say, have you killed her?"

"No, I have not killed her, though it would have been more merciful had I done so."

He begun at the first where his aunt had written him to come to the lawn party, and on that night planned the scheme for him to get Margoleen out of the way, gave a full and unreserved history of all their proceedings; how he had, in the disguise of her father, aroused her sympathy; told of the forged letter expressing his (Ethan's) pleasure at the idea of her union with himself; and when she at last consented to become his wife, provided he would take her without her heart. "How well I understood to whom her heart belonged, and that for this same cause did she refuse the hand of Waller Montgomery; she loved you, Ethan Lewis; her heart was truly yours, though she was made to believe that you cared nothing for her."

Ethan clinched his teeth; he saw that the man's life was fast ebbing away, yet he could scarce refrain from stamping him into the floor, and it was only the remembrance that he had not yet told him where she was, that he stayed his hand.

"Where is she? where is she?" he demanded.

"I don't know; indeed, I have not seen her since one year ago, to-night. I went home to her, disguised as her father, and finding that she was still deceived, I took off my disguise and showed her that her husband and supposed father were one and the same. Oh! how indignant she was, and when I again insisted that she should write to you for help, and taunted her with her vain love for you, she called me a dirty villain and dared me to do my worst; I struck her to the floor;"—here he gasped for breath and for some moments was apparently dead, until presently he revived enough to continue—"yes, I felled her to the floor and thought for a time I had not only destroyed her life, but the life of my child also. I fled, but crept back to see her leave the house; she boarded a southern bound train, and I have never heard from her since. I have told you all, now, won't you kill me? it would be a merciful act."

"No, I will not kill you, though you deserve punishment; I leave you in the hands of the Almighty. 'I will avenge, saith the Lord,' yet I believe he will be more merciful to you, since you have confessed to me the truth."

"I know he will, I know he will," and the remorseful man closed his eyes in death. Ethan Lewis went back to Cuthbert, resolved to con-

front Blanche Clifton with her baseness, and after placing his mother in more trusty hands, start in search of his tortured darling.

"I *will* find her, I *must* find her," again and again he uttered aloud, until he at last reached home, and on entering the sitting room, found his mother reclining upon the sofa and the heiress reading to her.

"Oh! Mr. Lewis, we are so glad to see you at home again; what on earth kept you away so long? Cuthbert is in gloom when its master is absent."

"Well, I left home in answer to a death-bed summons from your nephew, Benton Percy, who was sentenced to be hung for the murder of an old man whom he killed for his money. He gave me in full the details of your plans, and his actions which have wrecked mine and Margoleen Melbroke's lives." He began in the hearing of his mother and related the whole story. The betrayed fiend grew livid under their contemptuous stare, and finally, shrieking with rage, left the house and went afoot down to their neighboring city, where a letter awaited her, saying, "The Pine Grove mansion has been wrested away from you, and is now in the possession of its rightful owners."

The report of a pistol shot rang out on the air

and Blanche Clifton's hand had taken her own life."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"My son," said Mrs. Lewis, after the news came that Blanche Clifton had shot herself, "is it possible that I have been so much deceived in her with whom I have been so very intimate? Really, I considered her the most lovely woman of my acquaintance, and to her only was I willing to resign my position as mistress of Cuthbert."

"Ah! mother, you are a poor judge of human nature; I have considered her a snake in the grass since the first day I met her, and felt that she was no associate for my mother."

"And this accounts for your ignoring her overtures of friendship?"

"Certainly; I believed all the while that she was devoid of principle."

"Did she not really own the Pine Grove estate?"

"Not a bit of it, she was no other than a usurper; the mistress of an ill-famed lawyer, whose chicanery had defrauded some infant heirs, and for a time sustained her illegitimate claim; the true owners have at last gained possession of the property, and exposed to public scandal Blanche Clifton and her accomplice."

"Oh! Ethan; could I have but foreseen, how differently would I have acted towards her."

"Yes, mother, you put away a pure, sweet flower to gather a thorn that was to prick our hearts. Several years of my life have been swallowed up in misery by the treachery of that vile woman; and worse than all is the suffering of that innocent girl whose life has been tortured beyond tolerance."

"Go, Ethan; go, and never stop until you find and bring her back to us. My eyes are now opened to the fact that I have never valued her as she deserved; in judging the two women I mistook the dross for the gold. O! how I long to see her once more, that I may lavish my wasted affection upon her. Start to-morrow, son, and search diligently until you find her."

"As soon as you are better, and I can procure a trusty companion for you, I shall certainly start."

Yet instead of his mother getting better, she rapidly grew worse, and ten days later the doctor said she could not possibly live through the night.

"Ethan," she whispered to her son, as he sat by her dying bed, and held her wasted hand in his, "I'm going now, God is calling me from earth, and I want to tell you, my boy, how very

penitent I am for my many misgivings; I have given too much of my time and thought to fashion, yea, gaudy things of earth, and left undone the things that I now realize would make me far happier in the end. Could I live my life over again how very different would I act; yet, alas! the past is gone and is now buried in eternity, and I can only ask God to forgive my folly."

"Yes, mother, ask in sincerity and I believe he will forgive you."

"Son, will you pray with me?"

Instantly he dropped upon his knees, and raising his voice in earnest petition, implored God to have mercy on his dying mother, and to also strengthen his resolution to meet her in Heaven. When he arose his mother smiled and said, "My son, I am willing to go, and I feel that some day we will be united with your father who has long gone before; I had hoped to live to see Margoleen, but 'tis God's will to take me now, and I am resigned to go. When you find her ask her to forgive me the wrong I unconsciously did her, and tell her to meet me in Heaven. Kiss me, my child."

He imprinted a fond kiss upon her cheek, and her soul was wafted away.

After his mother was sacredly placed in the

vault beside his father, Ethan employed a tenant and left Cuthbert to search for his missing idol. He learned that she had taken a Southern route, but no definite clue to her existence could be given him. For several years he traveled, going in different directions, advertising, employing detectives, etc., yet all to no avail, until at last, believing her to be dead, he went back home a crushed and disappointed man.

About this time the condition of the country became uncertain, and the spirit of war sweeping like wild-fire became so prevalent as to electrify our hero. His sympathy being naturally with the people of his native soil, he became absorbed in the interest of his country, linked his fortune with the Confederate cause, gallantly marched to the front in battle, and was at the first bloodsheding of the civil war, which we remember to have taken place on the streets of Baltimore, April 19th, year 1861. But few men were killed upon this occasion, however, and Ethan Lewis was left unscathed. He bravely contested for the cause of his forefathers, until the bloody battle of Shiloh, where a merciful hand dragged him from among the dead and wounded, and carefully carrying him to a closed carriage in ambush, with the assistance of his driver, who was apparently a true type of old-fashioned slavery, placed

him among the soft cushions, supported his head against his sympathetic breast, and bade his attendant carry them, by slow and easy stages, from the gory scene of the battle field.

During their exit Ethan lay unconscious of his injuries. The next morning when he opened his eyes he saw a man standing over him, whose brow was of classic mould, and whose iron-grey locks bespoke the turning point of life.

"How do you feel this morning?" spoke his benefactor, whose pleasant smile in some peculiar way brought fond recollections to his mind, and his heart went out to him at once.

"I feel that I have had a terrible shock; tell me, am I seriously hurt?"

"No, I think not; being somewhat familiar with the science of surgery, I have probed your wound, taken out the bullet, and with proper care I think you will soon be able to enter service again."

"Where am I, and to whom am I indebted for this kindness?" viewing the nicely bandaged wound.

"You are not far from Shiloh, and be assured you are in the hands of one whose care and attention is freely given."

"Will you please tell me your name?" persisted Ethan. "Your face carries me back to

some one I have known; somewhere I have seen one that resembles it."

"I am known as William Malery; and yours sir, by what name shall I address you?"

"Ethan Lewis is my name."

"Well, Mr. Lewis, I'm glad to make your acquaintance, and trust we may become fast friends."

"Amen!" was the reply.

Every attention that William Malery and his servants could render was duly given the wounded soldier, yet he seemed to get worse instead of better, and finally, becoming somewhat alarmed about his condition, William Malery one day said to him, "Have you no lady relative whom you think would better understand how to nurse you?"

"I have no relative, but have a lady friend that I believe would do what she could for me."

"A sweetheart," suggested his friend, smiling.

"No, she is no sweetheart, but a pure, good, Christian woman, who has long been a special friend of mine."

"Shall I write for her to come; do you think her too prudish to come to the house of a widower?"

"She is sensible enough to go where her Christian duty demands. There is no mock

modesty about her, I'll assure you, yet she is a lady of the truest type."

"Then I shall ask her to come; my housekeeper will see that she is comfortably provided for."

Three days later Belle Seaton received a letter requesting her to come for a few days and assist in nursing her friend, Ethan Lewis, whose recovery was now considered doubtful. Immediately she packed her valise and was soon by his bedside, doing all in her power for his comfort; nor was her labor in vain, for it was not many days after her arrival until he took a change for the better, and was soon able to sit up. She remained with him five weeks, and when she decided to go home he was out of danger, and she and William Malery deeply in love with each other. This was confided to Ethan, who had also learned to esteem his new friend with marked deference; and when consulted in regard to them uniting their lives, he expressed himself as believing them well suited to each other. He never expected to marry himself, and feeling that he would rather Belle would be mistress of his old home than anyone else, sold Cuthbert to William Malery, with the privilege of making his home with them, provided he lived till the end of the war. The

agreement was made and the property assigned to Belle's husband, who was amply able to pay the cash for it. A few months later the marriage took place, and the happy pair started for Cuthbert, their future home, while Ethan continued in the service of his country until the close of the war.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

At last the bloody war is over, leaving many hearts and homes desolate. Those whose lives have been spared go back to their homes to resume the tranquil pursuits of civil life, among whom is the hero of our story. When he reached his old home he found that with the exception of a few, his slaves had availed themselves of their freedom and taken their departure in diverse courses. Tricksy, who had long since married that ideal beau, Jim, with her two little ebony girls and her old mother, Aunt Silvia, still remained, awaiting the coming of their master, also Phil, his faithful valet, refused to claim his freedom, preferring to remain with the one who had ever been kind and indulgent to him. "Well," my faithful servants," he answered their request to still live with him, "you can stay here and serve not only me, but also

the good people to whom I have sold this property."

"Sold this property, Marse Ethan! Is Cuthbert no longer your home?" and tears stood in their eyes.

"I have indeed sold it; yet, the people who bought it are my best friends, and I reserved a home with them for life should I prefer it. I want you all to do your duty, and I'll assure you neither I nor my friends will ever forsake you."

They agreed to remain as they wished to live and die with Marse Ethan.

As he wearily turned and left them, Phil said to his companions, "that man is grieving himself to death 'bout that little girl he loved so well. Oh! how I do wish he could find her."

Belle and her husband did everything in their power to make Ethan happy. His every comfort was considered, and he loved them devotedly, but the abiding paleness and wasting thinness of his face, the certain languor and weariness in all his movements, told that he was suffering, his trouble preyed upon his mind. He thought of Margoleen's pure, innocent face when he coldly repulsed her actions. "Fool, that I was!" he would sometimes exclaim, "I blame myself with every bit of it; why did I suffer her

to leave me as she did?" Again he becomes restless, and goes rambling around the world, praying to find her whom his soul loveth, and as he wanders on, we will go back to the magnificent home of the authoress, and see what is happening there. Again the season of the year rolls round when all creation awakes to new life; yes, it is a delicious spring morning. Last night a refreshing shower of rain feel upon the earth; to-day the sun shines on Mount Agnes, as our heroine entitles her home, causing the flowers to lift their heads, and in mute appeal inquire, "Am I not lovely?" Like heavy dew, or sparkling jewels, the rain drops still clung to leaf and blossom. A soft west wind stirred foliage and grass; the partridge called his bobolink. Aunt Katie and Uncle Edwin, like happy children, were watching the gold fish play in their crystal pool of water, whilst Margoleen sat upon the front veranda absorbed in deep meditation—can we imagine the thoughts that fill her mind? The world has bowed in homage at her feet; has her life not at last been crowned with success? From her position on the veranda she can look down the embankment and see a lovely streamlet with its banks lined with flowering ivy and laurel, looking like ghostly sentinels keeping silent watch over her mountain home, and she

thanked God for it all; yet was she truly happy? Reader, there are times when our hearts go out after things that have, perhaps, been wisely put out of our reach, yet a peculiar influence invests us with power to feel that our soul has a response.

With a face that not only showed intelligence, but deep womanly character, she looked towards Heaven, thence consulted her watch and called, "Aunt Katie, I'm going for a walk, I will not be gone long."

"It's been raining, and I'm afraid you will get your feet wet, honey," said the ever watchful old lady.

"No, no, I will wear my rubbers and pick my way."

"Well, mind you don't walk in the high grass."

I'll be careful to mind you, Aunt Katie," and Margoleen made her way down to the spring that flowed near the white graveled road that led down the hill, and upon which she had expended a goodly amount of money. She had stooped and was dipping with her hand from the crystal surface, when a voice from behind her said, "Lady, will you be kind enough to lend me your cup that I may get a drink of water?"

She turned to recognize the man whose hair was now streaked with grey, and whose former

erect carriage somewhat stooped, to be Ethan Lewis, the object of her life long love.

"My guardian," she gasped, and fainted on the spot.

"Margoleen, precious darling, don't die, live for the sake of him who has searched the world over for you."

A handful of water soon revived her sufficiently to know that the only man whom she had ever loved was by her side imploring forgiveness and upbraiding himself for having been the cause of all her trouble.

"Why did you not believe me when I told you I was innocent of the wrong of which you suspected me?" she asked.

"I did Margoleen; away down in my heart I knew you must be pure, yet my great love for you made me jealous; I was mad Margoleen, and scarcely responsible. My life since then has been one round of sorrow. Has not my error been expiated by what I have suffered? Margoleen I now believe that you once loved me, do you love me yet; say Margoleen, will you not forgive me and love me again?"

"Hush! I'm a married woman, and you should not insult me thus."

"Nay, my love, you are no longer a married woman." Taking the written confession of Ben-

ton Percy from his pocket, that was witnesses and signed by the turn-key and a minister, who were present when her husband died, he handed it to her to read. She lowered her head and prayed silently until Ethan continued, "Margoleen, say that I am forgiven."

"I truly forgive you," she replied.

"May I hope that the love that I would have given worlds to possess, and which, unconscious of its existence, I apparently ignored, still burns in your bosom for me?"

For a few moments she was silent.

"Answer me, Margoleen; I'm an impatient man, and it is cruel to keep me in suspense."

"You already know that I love you, Mr. Lewis, and shall continue to love you until breath leaves my body."

He bared his head, and in humble thanks lifted his voice in prayer. "To know that you forgive me, and still love me, Margoleen, is the most precious boon I have ever received, yet I am not content until you name an early day for our marriage. The many dangers and ugly falls over which our barges have passed, and the frosted locks of my head, warn us that we have no time to waste on formality. How long shall it be ere I claim my little ward as my own dear wife; I repeat, how long shall it be?"

"The day your heart demands it," she answered.

"Come, Margie," said he, taking her by the the hand, "let us go this hour and be married, and when I once get you under my thumb I shall pin you to my side as a necessary appendage."

"Have you still so little confidence in me as to fear to let me leave your sight?"

"Forgive me, darling, with my life I would trust you, but do not compel me to wait long to claim by peerless bride."

So it was decided that in one week's time they were to be married at the village church where she had worshipped since Aunt Katie had introduced her to its members.

"And how did you at last chance to find me here?" asked Margoleen on the way to the house as Ethan was explaining how earnestly he had searched for her.

"Well, after going North, South, East and West, I was on my way home, broken-hearted, sorrowing beyond measure, when passing through this village whose beautiful scenery, including this grand mountain, which is invested with a peculiarly hallowed and mystic influence, it arrested my attention and seemed to invite me to stop and rest my weary soul by exploring its loveliness. Little did I dream of finding you

here, my angel, yet, I well know that God in his infinite mercy directed my steps hither; and now tell me, Margoleen, how came you here on this beautiful mountain?"

"Come in," she said, evading his direct question, as she pushed open the door and continued, "this is my home. Come in, Mr. Lewis, you are most welcome; I have friends here who will explain to you what I feel a delicacy in mentioning. Sit here," she said, proffering him a rocker, "and I will send to you the dear old people who befriended me in my greatest sorrow; yea, through their influence have I been actuated to pursue the course that gave me this home, and better than all, they have shown me the path wherein to walk that I may reach that celestial home where joy is eternal."

Turning to the door, she disappeared, leaving him for a short period alone.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Softly the zephyrs lifted the rich, creamy lace curtains, sending a fragrance from the flowers, and gently fanning the cheek of him who in blissful expectancy, looked around the elegantly furnished room wondering what all this grandeur could mean, when again the door was opened,

this time to admit the mistress of this Garden of Eden, figuratively speaking. Behind her walked Aunt Katie, whose soft slippered tread, snowy locks, that were smoothly brushed back beneath her white cap, black silk gown, and the angelic expression of her face, entreated reverential tenderness; also, Uncle Edwin, whose noble deeds were certainly written in the book of heaven, brought up the rear.

After the formula of introduction, Margoleen saw that they were comfortably seated, and with a look of fondness, said to them, "Aunt Katie, I want you and Uncle Edwin to give my friend, Mr. Lewis, a true history of my acquaintance with you."

Again she absented herself, while the couple in question gave the full details of the past eight years of her life. When they explained how she had lain out in the cold, and in a starved condition, crawled to the milking gap and begged for one drink of milk from the bucket, and how, when her child died, she had prayed to die also. Together the kind old people mingled their tears with his, as he groaned aloud: "My darling! oh! my poor, tortured darling."

They concluded by telling him that she was now a famous authoress, whose genius had not

only enriched her purse, but also crowned her with honor. Many had been the times he had read, and admired her writings, all unconscious that they had sprung from the soul of her whom he loved.

He, in turn, explained to her friends how ardently he had loved her, how he had for years been searching for her, and how very mysteriously he chanced to find her. Also gave them full particulars concerning the death of her husband, then summoning her again in their midst, together the four knelt and offered thanks for the happiness brought forth this day.

They next talked about the wedding, which they arranged to take place the following Sunday morning in the church heretofore described. "Then," said Ethan, "shall your literary bondage be snapped asunder. I shall have no Bas Blue for my wife; do you hear, Margoleen? Your time which should have always been given to me, shall no longer be wasted upon the public. We will go back to Cuthbert, and the remaining days of our lives, enjoy the sweet pleasure of each others' society."

"In my joy I had forgotten that there still remains a great barrier to our happiness," said she.

"What can you mean, Margoleen? Nothing save death shall part us now."

"Mr. Lewis, would you marry a woman of obscure birth? Remember, I can tell you but little of my parents."

"Hush! Margoleen, put down your scare-crow; next Sunday morning at eight o'clock sharp, you are to become Mrs. Lewis, and we shall at once take up our abode at Cuthbert."

"I have two requests to make of you," she interrupted.

"What racks your busy little brain now, Margie?"

"First, I want you to agree that we make our home here. Mount Agnes is the dearest spot to me on earth; don't you think you could be content to live here?"

"Most assuredly, I would be happy *anywhere* with you, Margoleen, and in this respect your wish shall be granted, in fact I don't know but what it would be best; as you love your mountain home so much I would not separate you from it; besides, I have sold Cuthbert, but did not tell you, as I thought perhaps you would wish to live there, and I know I can redeem it if I so desire."

"To whom did you sell it?"

"Well, I have not yet had time to tell you that our old friend, Miss Belle Seaton, has recently married a good friend of mine, and that

they have purchased Cuthbert, where they now reside. However, I reserved a home with them. They have certainly been true friends to me, and believing *I* would never marry, I concluded I would rather Belle would be mistress of my old home than anyone else, consequently sold it to her husband, so we are agreed on this point. If it is your desire, Mount Agnes shall be our future home. What is your next request?"

"That Uncle Edwin and Aunt Katie occupy the same position in our home that they now do."

"I certainly would not have it otherwise," he replied, "for it is to them I'm indebted for my happiness to-day, so now I shall go down to the village below, where I shall take up my abode until Sunday morning, when I shall claim you as my wife. Meantime I must see you every day."

At last the day arrives for the realization of the dream of their souls. Sunday morning dawned a beautiful day; a flush of golden sunlight bathed the world, yea, sang above two hearts that at last were blest, the happy binding of their lives was now to take place.

Sparkling dew-drops still clung to flower and leaf, the woodland songsters warbled their merry greeting, the little church with spire lifting its head loftily towards Heaven, and which the

villagers had beautifully decorated with flowers, was now crowded to its utmost capacity, and while the bell still chimed the glad tidings, Ethan Lewis proudly led Margoleen Melbroke to the hymeneal altar. Thence they repaired to Cuthbert on a visit to his friends, who had been duly informed by Ethan that he was to be married on this appointed day, and would first come to them for congratulations before settling down in their permanent home.

He had never spoken of his ward to William Malery, consequently he knew nothing of his history in connection with her, neither did he mention in his letter the real name of the lady to whom he was to be married, as he preferred to take his friend, Belle, by surprise, therefore she knew not that the lady whom she was expecting as his bride, was the poor little waif of Lowland Inn, to whom she had given the gold necklace long years ago under that very roof; neither did she at first recognize her when she and Mr. Malery met them at the gate, yet the face of her companion grew as pale as death as Ethan led his wife up to them and said, "Belle, do you not remember my little ward, Margoleen Melbroke?"

"My child," shrieked William Malery, and before Ethan could comprehend his meaning, he

had gathered Margoleen in his arms, and pressing her to his bosom said to the bewildered group, "I know by instinct and by the favor of her mother that this is my long lost Margoleen," and apparently too much overcome to say more he would have sunk to the ground, but that Ethan supported him, and by the assistance of the ladies managed to get him into the house, where, after a few moments, he was sufficiently revived to tell his story as follows:

"My name is not Malery, but William Melbroke. I was an English nobleman, whose home was a proud castle with tower and battlements. Instead of marrying a proud heiress, as agreed by our ancestry, I married a poor girl who was possessed of a pure heart and respectable parentage. She was both beautiful and innocent, and loved me with marked devotion. With our darling baby girl, we lived happily together, until by enemies I was accused of conspiracy, arraigned before the Queen's Court, and without a fair trial exiled to the West India Islands. The vessel upon which I sailed was wrecked, yet in some miraculous way the hand of God saved me from a watery grave. I dared not go back to my country, yet tried by every devisable means, to obtain my wife and baby, though my efforts were of no avail. At last, I will not

detail by what means, I learned that my wife, believing me to be dead, engaged passage to this country, and while on board a steamer, sickened and died, leaving our child to the mercy of its passengers."

"What was her name?" asked Margoleen, who now stood trembling with agitation.

"Her maiden name was Agnes Valroy."

"I know you are my father," she exclaimed, as she threw her arms about his neck. "My mother's name was Agnes Melbroke, and I, your child, was christened Margoleen. I remember well the hour in which she died; she always told me my father was lost in a shipwreck."

After giving him a history of her mother's burial, Dinah Hicks, etc., she next drew forth her mother's picture and held it to his view.

"Sweet face," said he, "how well do I remember that expression; and you, my dear child," addressing Margoleen, "resemble your mother in form and feature. I have looked the wide world over for my lost child, and now that I find her, how thankful I am for the Divine Providence. Come Belle, my present sweet wife, let me introduce to you our child whom God has so mercifully restored to us, and Ethan, once my friend, now my child also, as a united band let us kneel and thank our Allwise

Creator for the great blessing he gives us this day.''

Several weeks were happily spent at Cuthbert. The newly found relationship rendered them doubly dear to each other, and many were their old friends who came in to congratulate them, and among them was Waller Montgomery and his lovely wife, whom he seemed to love deeply. A few more lines and we shall have done.

Several years have passed since the marriage of the master of Cuthbert and the mistress of Mount Agnes. To-day they are still happy in their mountain home, and two handsome boys bless their union. Over the well-kept graves of Aunt Katie and Uncle Edwin Frazier a lovely marble monument gleams in the summer sunlight.

Phil, the trusty old servant, still lives with his master, while Tricksy with her dusky family—including Aunt Silvia, who bids fair to live a good many years longer—live in a neat cabin on Mount Agnes, not far from the house of her mistress, who deeded to her this little home.

William Melbroke and his beloved wife often visit their children, who hold themselves greatly blest—blest beyond what language can express, because she is as fully her husband's life as he

is her's. She knows no weariness of his society, he knows none of her's. No more does she explore the fields of literature, no more weary hours of writing for the public, her soul is too full of happiness for her composition to bear the impress of genius or inspiration. She and he are precisely suited in character: harmony is the result. Trusting their lives may continue in bliss, we draw the curtain, and repeat—

"O, lay thy hand in mine, dear!
We're growing old;
But time hath brought no sign, dear,
That hearts grow cold.
'Tis long, long since our new love,
Made life divine;
But age enricheth true love,
Like noble wine.

O, lean thy life on mine, dear!
'Twill shelter thee;
Thou wert a winsom vine, dear,
On my young tree.
And so, till boughs are leafless,
And song birds flown,
We'll twine, then lay us, griefless,
Together down.

"O, weary heart, if you have missed
The goal thou sought'st to gain,
And dreamed of peace and rest and love,
And waked to bitter pain;

Take courage, and look up, O, heart!
For sunshine follows leaden rain;
The day will break on the blackest night,
And sweet flowers bloom again."

FINIS.

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